



The Community Foundation of South Alabama 2025 Competitive Grant Guidelines

Through its competitive grant-making process, The Community Foundation of South Alabama ("CFSA") awards grants to local nonprofits serving Mobile, Baldwin, Escambia, Monroe, Conecuh, Choctaw, Clarke, and Washington Counties. In 2025, the competitive grant-making process will be funded through the CFSA's designated funds, therefore funding will be allocated to specific priority areas and geographic areas as determined by donors.

The following guidelines offer general guidance to local nonprofits seeking to apply for funding through CFSA's competitive grant process. Each proposal is evaluated on its potential impact; the quality of planning, leadership, support, and vision expressed; the relative need for the program proposed; and the current funds available for distribution. Due to the large number of funding requests and the limited amount of funds available, not all proposals can be supported. An unsuccessful proposal does not reflect on the worthiness of a particular project.

Grant-making Priorities – Mental and Physical Health

- For 2025, CFSA will accept grant applications for projects focused on **supporting mental and physical health for individuals and families**.

Increasing mental and physical health support: The Foundation will work with community organizations to promote overall health and wellness within the region by supporting evidence-based, tested, and effective programs and activities that provide:

- Support for individuals and families who are battling trauma.
- Support for individuals and families experiencing trauma due to isolation, stress, economic anxiety, and joblessness as well as intimate partner violence and child abuse.
- Support for individuals and families who are battling illnesses and chronic diseases such as alcoholism, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, etc.
- Access to comprehensive specialty care and services across the lifespan with emphasis on under-resourced populations and communities.

Grant Cycle Timeline:

- **June 2, 2025** - Invitation to submit a formal proposal will be made available at www.communityfoundationsa.org. Formal proposal deadlines are firm. Applicants will submit their formal proposal electronically using the CFSA Online Application.
- **July 31, 2025** - All formal proposals must be submitted electronically using the CFSA Online Application by 4:00 p.m. CDT. Technical Support ends at 12 p.m. CDT. **Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered. Hard copies will not be accepted.**

- **August 1 – September 24, 2025** - Submissions will be evaluated and follow up phone interviews and/or site visits may be conducted. The length of this phase is dependent upon the quantity of applications received. [Please do not contact the Foundation. Applicants may be contacted via email to schedule phone interviews and/or site visits.](#)
- **September 25, 2025** - Applicants will be notified of final decision.

Grant Application Process

- Interested applicants should review CFSA's grant-making guidelines and requirements.
- Based upon the cycle's deadlines, eligible applicants must complete and submit a full proposal through CFSA's online application. Please note that CFSA will only accept proposals via the online system and the published deadlines are firm.
- Site visits and/or follow-up conversations may be conducted after the Full Proposal deadline.

Types of Grants & Grant Terms

Through its competitive grant-making, CFSA is awarding program, capacity building and capital project grants in 2025. These grants are typically **one-year** funding commitments.

Program Grants

Program grants enable a nonprofit organization or coalition of organizations and interested stakeholders to implement a specific project designed to benefit the community. CFSA is most interested in supporting sustainable programs that have the potential to produce meaningful results on community priorities and/or needs. Funding is provided for the expansion or refinement of existing programs as well as new programs that show promise of efficacy and sustainability. Grants to programs with a successful track record are also considered. Program grants are restricted to expenses directly and indirectly related to the operation of the project. No more than 20% may be used to pay for indirect or administrative expenses. Grants may not be used for general operating support or organizational capacity building.

Capacity Building Grants

CFSA defines organizational capacity building as any strategy that improves and enhances a nonprofit's ability to achieve its mission and sustain itself over time. CFSA recognizes great value in developing the internal capacities of nonprofit organizations to increase their effectiveness and community impact. More pointedly, CFSA believes that by supporting organizational capacity building it will enable nonprofits to strengthen their operations and effectively address systemic issues that significantly impede the quality of life for individuals and families that they serve.

Organizations proposing a capacity building grant should address how the project strengthens the organization and how it will enhance its mission and benefit the community served. **Funding for capacity building is not designed to support a specific program or initiative**, but rather to enhance the overall daily operations of an organization. Examples of capacity building activities include the following:

- Strategic planning
- Enhanced marketing and communications
- Leadership capacity (Board or Executive)

- Improved fundraising and development
- Organizational assessments
- Staff and board training
- Technological improvements

When considering whether the activity that you seek to propose qualifies as organizational capacity building, you are encouraged to ask the following questions:

- **Does this activity allow my whole organization to operate more effectively, or does it have a limited effect on a program or initiative?** For example: Improving fundraising skills affects the entire organization over a long period. But having a fundraising dinner for a program only affects that program for that fiscal year.
- **What are the major operational areas that need attention and will help the organization grow and achieve its mission?** For example: There may be a need for financial management software, a donor database and upgraded communications materials. Not being able to do them all, an organization must select one that is going to move it forward strategically.
- **Is there a bottleneck in the organization that is stalling growth?** For example: An organization may need to recruit new volunteers but not have a way to reach the local community, such as a website.

Capital Project Grants

Capital grants are used to support the construction, renovation, expansion, or major repair of physical facilities or infrastructure. These grants are typically awarded to create or improve spaces that serve the public or fulfill your organization's mission.

Key features of a capital building grant:

- **Purpose:** Focused on physical projects (not operating costs or programs).
- **Examples of use:** Constructing a new building, renovating an existing structure, upgrading accessibility, or improving energy efficiency.

Grant Amounts

CFSA grant amounts may range from \$5,000-\$25,000. Requests should not exceed \$25,000. Please be advised that submitting an application does not guarantee funding.

Limitations, Restrictions & Requirements

Geographic area: Organizations must serve Baldwin and Mobile counties. All requested funding must directly benefit individuals who reside in these counties.

IRS charitable status: Applicant organizations must be recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)3 organization, government entity, educational institution, or religious organization. If applying using fiscal sponsorship, the applicant must present a formal written agreement.

CFSA Typically Does Not Fund:

- Individuals

- Fundraising expenses
- Religious activities
- Conference or seminar expenses
- Lobbying or political activities
- Political organizations or candidates for public office
- Budget deficit or debit reduction
- Scholarship or endowment funds of another charity
- Tickets for charity benefits
- Capital projects and campaigns

Funding Considerations

CFSA seeks to fund proposals that:

- Focus on work that increases exposure to the arts and culture
- Exhibit the potential to accomplish meaningful results or impact in one or more of the priority areas
- Address community challenges, underserved populations, and/or service gaps
- Articulate measurable outcomes (desired results), effective approaches, and viable plans for maintaining ongoing efforts
- Demonstrate strong community support, capable leadership, and knowledge of, and involvement in, the communities served
- Include a realistic project budget and organizational financial information demonstrates fiscal health (e.g., diversified revenue sources, sustainability, solvent, etc.)

In addition, we strongly encourage proposals that include one or more of the following:

- Incorporate fresh, innovative approaches that are based on research, experience, and best practices in the field
- Use collaborative strategies that support efficiencies, increase effectiveness, and build leadership in achieving broader community impact
- Leverage the proposed CFSA grant with other financial and human resources

Grant & Reporting Requirements: Each successful applicant will be required to sign a grant agreement with The Community Foundation of South Alabama before receiving a grant payment. Grant objectives, outcomes, payment schedules and reporting requirements will be outlined in the agreement. All grant recipients must also attend an orientation.

Please direct any additional questions you may have about the CFSA competitive grant-making process to Jena Berson, jberson@communityfoundationsa.org.