

Frequently Asked Questions about the Grant-Making Process

1. If my organization submits a concept paper to the Chorus Foundation (Foundation), are we guaranteed to receive funding?

No. Chorus Foundation staff will review your concept paper and inform you within roughly one month about whether or not your organization is invited to submit a full proposal to the Foundation. Even if your organization is invited to submit a full proposal, funding is not guaranteed. Funding commitments are not finalized until an organization returns a signed gift agreement to the Foundation. If your organization does not complete its full proposal within one month of the invitation date, the invitation may be rescinded.

2. What types of projects and organizations does the Chorus Foundation fund?

In general, the Foundation funds projects and organizations working to build political, economic, and cultural power with the aim of creating a just transition to a regenerative economy in the United States. A database of the Foundation's past grants can be found on the [What We Fund](#) page. Please note that the Chorus Foundation cannot fund lobbying with project support grants.

3. Does the Chorus Foundation have any geographic priorities?

The Foundation makes grants across the United States. There are four regions to which it has made explicit multi-year commitments—the state of Alaska; Buffalo, New York; Eastern Kentucky; and Richmond, California—and these four regions constitute some three-quarters of the Foundation's grant-making budget each year. Please note, the Foundation does not support any work outside of the United States.

4. Does the Chorus Foundation provide multi-year grants?

In some cases, the Foundation provides multi-year grants, most often to returning grantees. New grantees generally receive grants of one year or less.

5. When are concept papers and proposals reviewed?

Concept papers and proposals are reviewed on a rolling basis. After receiving a full proposal, the Foundation will review it and respond within roughly one month. If you are invited to submit a full proposal, you must do so within one month of the invitation date.

6. Can I still submit a concept paper if my organization is not a nonprofit organization under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code?

You may submit a concept paper without being a 501(c)3 organization if you have a fiscal sponsor that meets this description. The Chorus Foundation cannot accept proposals from organizations that have neither 501(c)3 status nor a fiscal sponsor. It also cannot accept proposals from individuals.

7. What is a fiscal sponsor?

According to the [Trust for Conservation Innovation](#), a fiscal sponsor is “a nonprofit organization that provides fiduciary oversight, financial management, and other administrative services to help build the capacity of charitable projects.” Before entering into a fiscal sponsorship relationship, you may wish to review [this set of important questions](#) from the Forbes Funds. More information about fiscal sponsorship can be found on the website of the [National Council of Nonprofits](#). If you are using a fiscal sponsor, the Foundation does require a written agreement from you and your fiscal sponsor as part of the concept paper submission process. Please note that **after beginning the process, you will not be able to change your fiscal sponsor**. If your fiscal sponsor changes, the process will start over from the beginning.

8. Does the Foundation provide general operating support?

Yes. Approximately three-quarters of the Foundation’s grants provide general operating support. However, such support is generally provided to the Foundation’s long-term grantees.

9. Should my organization submit a concept paper, or a full proposal for a specific project or for general operating support?

Please submit a concept paper if you are uncertain whether you should submit a proposal for a specific project or general operating support.

Concept papers are generally shorter and provide the Foundation with basic information about your organization and funding request. Concept papers also provide the opportunity to receive informal feedback on project ideas prior to preparing a full proposal.

Full proposals for specific projects provide the Foundation with more details about your organization and the specific project you seek support to complete. Applicants or projects that are new to the Foundation are encouraged to submit proposals to support specific projects.

Similar to project-specific proposals, the full proposal for general operating support provides the Foundation with more details about your organization, the programs or projects implemented by the organization, and the funding request.

10. How much funding should an organization request?

The Foundation's grants typically range from \$15,000 to \$100,000 per year to any individual organization. The exact amount generally will be determined upon reviewing materials submitted by an organization and through conversations with representatives of the organization.

11. My organization would like to apply for general operating support, but we are fiscally sponsored. Should I apply for general operating support or project support?

Because your organization has a fiscal sponsor, you need to apply for project support. Your fiscal sponsor should be listed as the "organization," and the name of your own organization should be listed as the "project."

12. How long should our concept paper be?

We recommend that concept papers be no longer than five pages, although concept papers of any length can be submitted. You may also consider simply submitting a concept paper that was developed for another foundation.

13. Should I send in any information by regular mail?

No. The Foundation's concept paper and application process takes place entirely online via [this webpage](#). Links to access the application process for the concept paper, and full project or general operating support grants are available on the [Applying for a Grant](#) page. Please do not send hard copies of materials to the Foundation, as we cannot guarantee they will be reviewed.

14. If our organization or project is funded, will we need to provide any reports on how we used the funding?

Yes. Grantees are required to submit a final report within one month of their grant's end date. This report includes space for reflection about project successes, surprises, lessons learned, and feedback for the Foundation. Grantee reports are also shared with an all-grantee listserv so that grantees may learn from and possibly connect to each other's work.

15. If our organization or project is not funded, can we reapply to the Foundation at a later date?

If your organization or project is not funded, you may request feedback from a Foundation representative. Reapplications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

16. I have already been told by someone from the Foundation that my organization or project will receive funding. Why do I need to complete this paperwork?

In order to ensure proper record-keeping, tracking, and due diligence, the Foundation asks every grantee to submit a formal application that requests information about your organization or project, a narrative, and financial information. The Foundation must receive this information before your grant payment can be processed. Foundation staff review this information to ensure that your funding request reflects the conversation you have had with a Foundation representative and that your organization is a 501(c)3 organization in good standing; this includes verification of your 501(c)3 status and review of your financial health.

17. Why does the Foundation require that my organization have a CPA review or audit of our financial statements as part of its concept paper process?

The Foundation considers such external review of an organization's finances a best practice. The appropriate level and type of review depends on your organization's budget: a CPA review is required for organizations with budgets over \$250,000 and an audit for budgets over \$500,000. Your state may have a different standard, but these are the levels set by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, where the Foundation is based. Since these external reviews can only be conducted on a completed fiscal year, you may not have already had such a review completed. If you are a first-time applicant to the Foundation, this requirement may be waived. However, any future applications must contain such a review, and the Foundation may also ask that you complete such a review as part of its grant requirements. If you are using a fiscal sponsor, the CPA review and audit requirement applies to the fiscal agent.

18. Why does the Foundation request that my organization provide its strategic plan and logic model? How does the Foundation define these documents? Are these required parts of our proposal?

If your organization is invited to submit a full proposal to the Foundation, we request that you submit your organization's current strategic plan and logic model, if available.

A strategic plan is a document that outlines your organization's goals, along with strategies and tactics to achieve those goals, generally over a period of several years. The plan may also include information about organizational development, fundraising, staffing, and more.

A logic model (which might also be referred to as a theory of change) provides a representation of the activities your organization plans to undertake and the outputs and outcomes you expect will result from these activities, all in service to your organization's long-term goals.

If your organization currently has a strategic plan and/or logic model (or theory of change), please include these documents as attachments to your proposal. However, if these documents do not currently exist, you do **not** need to create them solely for the Foundation's grant-making process; not having these documents does not reflect negatively on your submission.

19. Can current grantees submit a new concept paper for the Foundation to review?

Yes, any organization may submit a concept paper at any time. Current grantees may choose to submit a concept paper for a project different from the one the Foundation is already supporting or a new full proposal.

If an organization is requesting ongoing support for a current grant, the organization may skip the concept paper phase and are advised to submit a full proposal for ongoing support before the completion of the current grant. Please note that a new award for continued support will not be finalized until reports on the current funding are submitted and reviewed.

20. I understand that the Foundation provides travel grants. Is this true?

Yes, the Foundation does provide travel grants, but only to current grantees of the Foundation. Grantees should contact the Foundation for guidelines for travel grants. Organizations seeking travel grants **should not** submit a concept paper.

21. What if I have a question that is not answered here?

Please contact Paula Lentoni, grants manager at Mott Philanthropic, at 617.927.5731 or plentoni@mottphilanthropic.com. Paula or another Chorus Foundation staff member will be able to assist you.