



Community Grants Update April 7, 2020

Project Grant Conversions to Operating Support; Final Reports

If you got a PROJECT GRANT for 2019-20 and requested conversion of your project grant to general operating support, it has been APPROVED. Your contract amendment will be mailed or emailed to you soon. For the group that requested an extension, it, too, was approved to October 31, 2020.

If you got any grant for 2019-20, your final report is still due on April 30, using the same form. However, you may be super-succinct in your responses! Do remember that the reviewers will have access to your final report so – if you have the time to spend creating a good “story” in your report, it might be a good investment of a few extra minutes.

Overview of Community Grants 2020-21

The CFGV board approved these major changes:

- The “sit out” rule has been suspended for 2020. It is likely that those 5 groups will sit out next year.
- All nonprofits, whether based in Gunnison County or elsewhere, will apply for general operating support. This means that you simply request an amount of money and do not describe how you plan to spend it. It can be spent on anything at all – from scholarships to staff to utilities to programs. If you are a first-time applicant, you must call Maryo before you start your application, 641-3570.
- All government applicants – WCU, County, Gunnison-Watershed – will apply for project support (even if your office does only one thing and it “looks like” a general operating support application).
- The application process has been streamlined.

Let's Get Specific

You'll go to www.cfgv.org > nonprofits > community grants. There you'll find the guidelines, application form, and how the grants are reviewed. To apply, you will need to create an account if you do not already have one.

Your application will consist of:

- Some initial information: contact information, EIN, year founded, number of locals and number of visitors you impact in a typical year, and how much you are requesting.
 - If you're a nonprofit requesting General Operating Support (GOS) you will tell us the total amount of your CURRENT YEAR budget, and you will request a flat amount of money. (If you are a tiny organization this can't be more than half of your operating budget.)
 - If you're a public entity requesting Project Support, you will tell us the total cost of your project, and will identify how much money you are requesting. This amount can't be more than half of the cash cost of your project.
- You'll give us your mission statement or, in the case of a public entity, the purpose statement of your office/group.
- You'll respond to 4 questions, each with up to 125 words:
 1. Whom do you serve, and what is the need? Be specific. How many people are you talking about? Do you have data to show us the need? Perhaps a tiny vignette of a person who is struggling could “illuminate” the data?

- **TIP:** Experience shows us that the more generalities are used in this response, the less competitive the application.
 - **TIP:** Reviewers will be up- and down-valley people, full- and part-time people. Don't assume they know you, and don't assume they know anything about the need that you are addressing.
 - **TIP:** We fully understand that arts/culture, history, environment, community development and athletics groups may have greater challenges in communicating "need" than education, health & human services, even animal welfare groups. Still: can you leave the reviewer thinking: "Oh, man, I didn't realize ____?" Perhaps providing some national data that, for instance, kids without music are less likely to _____?
 - **TIP:** The "need" isn't your mission! Your mission is to meet a need. A classic example: A need is not that there is no animal shelter in town. The animal shelter is what is done to meet a need: health issues, safety issues, moral issues....
2. What do you do? What difference have you made?
 3. How is COVID-19 affecting your organization now? (staff, programs, cash reserves.....)
 4. How are you thinking that it might affect you in the year ahead?
 5. Financials and attachments:
 - Nonprofits will provide (even if not yet approved by the board) a budget-to-actual as of April 30, 2020, that includes the entire CURRENT YEAR budget, regardless of when your fiscal year starts. Out-of-county groups will provide a budget-to-actual for their current year budget for their Gunnison County operations only. You also need to upload a copy of: a) your Certificate of Good Standing and b) your Certificate of Charitable Solicitations. These can be found at the Colorado Secretary of State website. Both must reflect that you are current on May 15 (ie if it is current on the day you applied, but expires before May 15, you'll lose points in the review).
 - Public entities will provide a project budget that shows both income and expense, and that balances.
 - **TIP**, the less the reviewers need to guess, the better off you are. If there's something that might look odd or incomprehensible to a reviewer (for instance acronyms that one might not know), put a note on the budget document to explain it.
 - If you are applying through a fiscal sponsor, you need to include a memo that affirms that your sponsor is accountable for your application and finances.
 6. The Board has affirmed that our 8 categories (animal welfare, arts/culture, athletics/recreation, community development, education, environment health/human services, history) are all equally important. The grant review chair will try to ensure that. BUT human nature being what it is, think about the reviewers who are feeling so horrified by the amount of human need here that they may – even unconsciously - prioritize certain activities over others. We wish it weren't so; but the burden is on each applicant to show that they are addressing a need that matters.

Review Criteria & Process

This is what the reviewers will be given and the way they will assign points:

"Review process: possible 50 points



1. *Clarity about the population served and the need: up to 10 points*
2. *Description of the applicant/group: what it does, and its impact to date: up to 20 points. Consider, for instance, alignment with mission, how many years they have served the community, clarity about what the group does, and specificity about their impact.*
3. *Impact of COVID-19 now: up to 10 points. Consider, for instance, the group's finances, impact on programming, fundraising and staff, ways they are addressing uncertainty.*
4. *Possible impact of COVID in the future: up to 10 points. Consider, for instance, whether the group is realistic and creative about possible alternative futures, considering fundraising strategies, rethinking its role in the community if needed – or projecting that they are able to continue relatively uninterrupted.”*

You will receive a score in each of these four areas. Scores will be aggregated and applications ranked. The reviewers will first look at the bottom of the rankings and decide whether there are any proposals that were not as competitive as the others. Then the reviewers will address the proposals that are above this “cutoff line” and, using the ranked order as their guide, propose dollar amounts. The reviewers’ recommendations will go to the CFGV Board for approval. Once approved, contracts will be written and when they are returned, checks will be cut.

Timeline

Deadline May 15, 11:59. No extensions will be granted.

Proposals reviewed and amounts recommended June 22.

Recommendations reviewed/approved by Board June 25.

Contracts mailed (ideally) June 26.

And

Given that there may be more applicants this year, and that some donors may choose to give to COVID-19 Recovery rather than Community Grants ... we have no idea what grant amounts might be typical. We know that \$7,000 has been our maximum to date (and very few \$7,000 awards have been made) and we believe that grants will probably be more modest this year. We definitely do not advise you to request more than \$7,000, and it might be a good strategy to consider asking for less than that.

- **TIP:** In the wonderful world of grantwriting, it is super smart to try and put yourself in the reviewers’ shoes. What might their response be if everyone asks for the high end amount that CFGV has awarded in the past? Of course, you do have to balance this with your real need, and we know that needs this year are especially huge....

We hope that flexibility will matter ... even if we can't give everyone the dollars they deserve.

Getting Help

Technical help and budget help: Contact Alicia, 970-901-0122, alicia@cfgv.org

Content help: Contact Maryo, 970-641-3570, maryo@cfgv.org