

Strengthening Organizations Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is the goal of the Strengthening Organizations grant program?**

The goal of this grant program is to provide funding for projects that will strengthen existing organizations so they may more efficiently and effectively serve their mission and/or expand services.

2. **What activities are NOT eligible for funding?**

Examples include: paying for operating activities such as staff training required to perform one's job; staff time; operational technology (laptop, iPad); and memberships in organizations and/or annual fees. Individuals and projects outside Alaska are not eligible for funding.

3. **How important are other sources of funding in the project budget?**

Other funding sources (grants from other foundations or private parties, matching grants, funding from the organization itself, etc.) can be very important to make your application stand out in a competitive grant process. Having other funding sources shows community support for your project. Funding contributed to the project from your own organization shows a commitment to the project from your board and staff.

4. **Does in-kind count?**

[In-kind](#) donations can be a great way to show community support for your project. Donations that reduce the expenses of the project, but are not monetary gifts, are considered in-kind. Staff and board time does not count as in-kind because that time is already required for operations.

5. **How much money can we ask for?**

The guidelines state applicants can request up to \$10,000, but awards typically range from \$4,000 to \$5,000. Call anytime to talk with an ACF Program Officer about your project.

6. **Should I include quotes from vendors or consultants?**

Quotes from vendors are not required, but when appropriate can be very helpful in the review process and will enhance any application. With or without a quote, it is important to have identified the consultant you plan to work with and to articulate why they are the right partner in this project.

7. **Can you explain what a board member's donation should be?**

The grants committee prioritizes organizations whose board members have made a cash contribution to the organization within the previous 12 months. While valuable, in-kind donations from board members do not count toward this goal. The amount of the financial

contribution is entirely dependent on the individual board member. While \$25 may be meaningful to one member, \$1,000 may be a meaningful gift to another—depending on one's income level. Board financial giving assures the funder that the leadership of an organization supports the project and the mission of the organization.

8. How are applications evaluated?

Applications are evaluated by a sub-committee of the ACF Board and other members of the community with experience in organizational development. Evaluation criteria include:

- The existence of an active board that makes a personally meaningful cash contribution to the organization annually
- Other sources of financial support are considered
- How the proposed project fits with an organization's mission and maturity
- If the project has been carefully planned and conceived
- A realistic timeline for implementing and completing the project
- A plan for moving forward, when appropriate, once the project is completed
- How the project will benefit the organization and the community it serves
- If the project will add to the overall ability of the organization to better fulfill its mission

9. When can I expect a funding decision?

The Strengthening Organizations grants committee will review applications every 4 – 6 weeks. Decisions will be communicated via email within the week following this meeting.

10. If my proposal is funded, when will funding be provided?

If your proposal is funded, you will be required to complete an online grant agreement and check request. This document is assigned to you in the online system that you used to complete your application. Once submission confirmation of your check request is received, a check will be mailed within 30 days. We do not require submission of receipts to receive funding; funding should be requested all at once.

11. May we speak with someone at ACF to discuss our project before we even apply?

Yes. We encourage potential applicants to talk with staff about proposed projects to see if the project and/or timing are right for this program.

12. My proposal was funded, but there are significant changes to our project/activity. Can we seek approval to change the use of funds?

Any change constituting more than 10% of the overall project budget requires prior ACF staff approval. Any change to the intent of the project from the original proposal will be considered by ACF staff, but significant changes are discouraged. Funding may not be used for separate activities, unless directly tied to the original, approved proposal.

13. If my proposal is NOT funded, can I roll my application to the next Strengthening Organizations deadline?

Yes, you may resubmit your application for a future cycle. The documents should be saved in the online system, yet we encourage applicants to also save their work on their own computers. A draft review is still available and encouraged.

14. Can I submit a proposal for a project or activity that is/will be completed before I can reasonably expect a response to my application?

No. Funding may only support activities that have yet to occur. Reimbursements are not eligible for funding.

15. If my organization receives a Strengthening Organizations grant, when are we eligible to reapply?

You may reapply for future funding at any time as long as there are no outstanding reports due on previous funding (a final report is due within 30 days after completion of the project). Proposals that support new projects, rather than continued support (such as step two of the previously funded project), will be more competitive.

16. If our application is declined, can we find out why?

Yes. If your application is declined, an ACF Program Officer is available to talk with you.