Community Development Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

General Questions

1. **What types of organizations are eligible?**
   Any organization, if it is a 501(c)(3), is eligible for funding from this process, including religious organizations and educational organizations. Organizations who are incorporated in the State of North Carolina as a nonprofit organization can apply with a fiscal agent. Previous funding through the Community Development Program or other focus areas does not impact your eligibility.

2. **I couldn't make one of the information sessions, can I still speak with a staff member about this grant program?**
   Yes! Our program staff wants to be as transparent and accessible as possible to nonprofits interested in applying for Community Development funding. Feel free to reach out to [Ebony](#) or [Sarah](#) with any questions you may have. In addition, a recording of our webinar can be found [here](#) and on our website.

3. **Can we apply for a grant if we previously received support from the Community Development grant program?**
   Yes! Previous Community Development grantees and/or grantees of other discretionary funding areas can apply for this grant.

4. **Can we apply for a Community Development grant if our organization is also actively applying for another TCF program area grant this Fall, too?**
   Yes! You can apply for any other TCF grant for which your organization is eligible for.

Questions about Grantmaking Strategy

1. **How did you determine the priority populations for this grant program?**
   Priority will be given to organizations working with populations most likely to experience poverty in the Triangle, including people of color, families headed by single women, LGBTQ+ community, seniors, and/or people living with a disability. They were informed by a variety of resources, including external research, general feedback from nonprofit organizations working in Community Development, and our own observations from funding in this area for five years.

2. **Are you *really* funding General Operating support?**
   Yes! We are funding general operating support. The Foundation believes in the importance of general operating support for nonprofit organization and understand that many funders do not provide this type of support. Through this grant process, we hope to learn more about the types of support needed by nonprofits to carry out their missions.

3. **Can we split the funding in different ways over the two year? For instance, if we are awarded $40K can we get $15K during the first year and $25K in the second year?**
   Yes! If your proposal will need a different amount of funding over the two years, please indicate that in your grant proposal in the "Optional Budget Narrative" section.

4. **Can our organization still apply for capacity building support if we need it?**
   Yes, organizations can apply for funding for capacity building needs. We recommend that organizations talk with program staff to discuss which type of support to apply for. Feel free to reach out to [Ebony](#) or [Sarah](#) with any questions you may have.

5. **How do we know if our organization fits in the "other" core issue area?**

While developing the Community Development program strategy, we wanted to continue to focus on health, housing, and employment, but also learn about and fund through this new strategy 'adjacent' issue areas that support the above core issue areas. When speaking with nonprofits and community leaders, we envisioned some "adjacent" issues being issues such as transportation, childcare, and food security. If you have a question about whether your organization fits in the "other" category, please reach out to either [Ebony](#) or [Sarah](#) to discuss your organization and proposal further.

6. **What resource is the Triangle Community Foundation using to define social determinants of health?**

We used the working definitions from the [NC Department of Health and Human Services](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.](#)

7. **Can collaborative projects apply?**

Yes. However, an organization applying under a collaborative application, will not be eligible for funding for a separate proposal to the Community Development program outside of the collaborative.

8. **Can an organization apply for multiple projects?**

No. Organizations can only submit one proposal for this grant program.

9. **Is our organization too large/small for this grant program?**

No. We did not put any budget limits on organizational size for this grant and we anticipate funding groups across the budget spectrum. For context, a summary of budget trends from the last five years of the Community Development program is below. Organizations requesting funding that is more than 25% of their annual operating budget must contact us prior to submitting a proposal.

Budget Trends			
	All Applicants	**Awarded**	**Denied**
Range	$5,544 - $88,813,408	$17,924 - $18,928,327	$5,544 - $88,813,408
Mean	$2,025,860.07	$1,252,266.78	$2,688,940.03
Median	$363,635.00	$594,540.50	$240,000.00

Table 1. The difference in median budget for organizations that we awarded grants to and those that were denied was $354,540.50.

10. **What are the review criteria for this grant process? How are they weighed?**

Currently, we have four primary review criteria which can be found below. At this time, we have not applied any weighting so they will all be considered equally.

- Alignment with program goals – How well does your proposal fit with the core issue areas of the Community Development Program?
- Organization's ability to carry out proposal – Reviewers will look at your organization's previous impacts/outcomes/accomplishments, project/program budget, staff leadership, and the scope of your proposal overall.
- Organizational financial health – We'll use the financial ratios worksheet in combination with organizational revenue/expense/surplus or deficit information and any additional information you include in the "Optional budget narrative". We acknowledge that some grassroots or younger

nonprofits may not have "strong" ratios at this time. We will not eliminate a group based solely on their financial ratios.
- Equity and community engagement – Reviewers will look at board and staff composition, the degree to which the proposed work will impact priority populations, and how the organization involves the people they serve in planning and decision-making.

Questions about Grant Process and Application

5. **What is the financial ratios worksheet?**
The financial ratio worksheet is a new tool we are using for this grant process to capture organizational financial information. The intention behind this was to remove bias and subjectivity from the application review process when committees assess organizational financial health. We believe this worksheet will create a more streamlined process for capturing this information. Prior to advisory committee review, program staff will compile a summary of your budget information for committee review to hopefully facilitate more objective considerations of financial health.

We acknowledge that some grassroots or younger nonprofits may not have "strong" ratios at this time. If you fall into this category, please don't let the worksheet keep you from applying! You will need your organization's balance sheet, approved budget, and your most recent 990 tax return to complete the worksheet. If you don't have these documents or have questions about completing the worksheet, reach out to [Sarah.](#)

6. **Our organization's staff and board aren't reflective of the communities we serve. Can we still apply for this grant?**
Yes. We are asking this question to better understand where your organization is in its equity journey – there is no right or wrong answer. If you believe your staff isn't currently reflective of the communities it serves, we encourage you to acknowledge that and discuss what you are doing to change that. That could include anything from a more diverse board recruitment strategy to changes in hiring practices.

7. **What is the anticipated reporting requirement?**
We are planning for mid-point check in's with grantees during Summer 2020. In addition, final grant reports will be due in January 2022.

8. **Will there be another funding cycle in Fall 2020 if we are not rewarded?**
No. During this shift to a two-year grant cycle we want to build stronger relationships with our grantees throughout the grant period. Instead of administering another grant cycle, we hope to spend more time cultivating relationships with grantees, being more responsive, and learning alongside them as we continue to improve this program area.

9. **Is this funding available for nonprofits doing advocacy and/or lobbying work?**
Currently, the Foundation does not fund lobbying work. Nonprofits can, however, use this funding to engage in advocacy work related to at least one of the core issue areas. To learn more about advocacy and what nonprofits can do, [click here.](#)

10. **Our organization is applying for support for a pilot program. How should we answer the key accomplishments and outcomes question?**
   In this question on the application, we encourage those applying for pilot program/seed funding support to discuss how and why this is the opportune time to pilot the program/project you are pursuing or work you have done to lay the foundation for this program/project.

11. **How many grants will the Foundation be allocating at each funding level and type?**
   This will depend some on the application pool. Our initial assumption is that we will be awarding between 12-15 grants for a total of $400k. Our current assumption is that we will have *around* 8 grants at the $20K funding level and 6 grants at the $40K funding level Currently, we anticipate granting 50-75% to general operating and 25-50% to project support, but that is subject to change based on the actual application pool.

12. **If my organization applies for $40K grant award and we aren't awarded, will we be considered for the $20K grant level?**
   No. Your organization will only be considered at the funding level that you apply for.