



## 2027 COMMUNITY GRANTS GRANT SEEKER SESSION

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**CHECK IN**



# HOUSEKEEPING

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**NEWSLETTER SIGN UP**

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# WHO IS THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION?

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For more than 30 years, the Community Foundation for the CSRA has served as a trusted philanthropic partner and community connector.

We work with donors, nonprofits, businesses, volunteers, and community leaders to strengthen our region through charitable giving, strategic investments, and community partnerships.

## Connecting Passion with Purpose

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# OUR MISSION

To Engage, Inform, and Inspire

"To engage, inform and inspire donors and nonprofits to build a stronger and more vibrant community."

We believe:

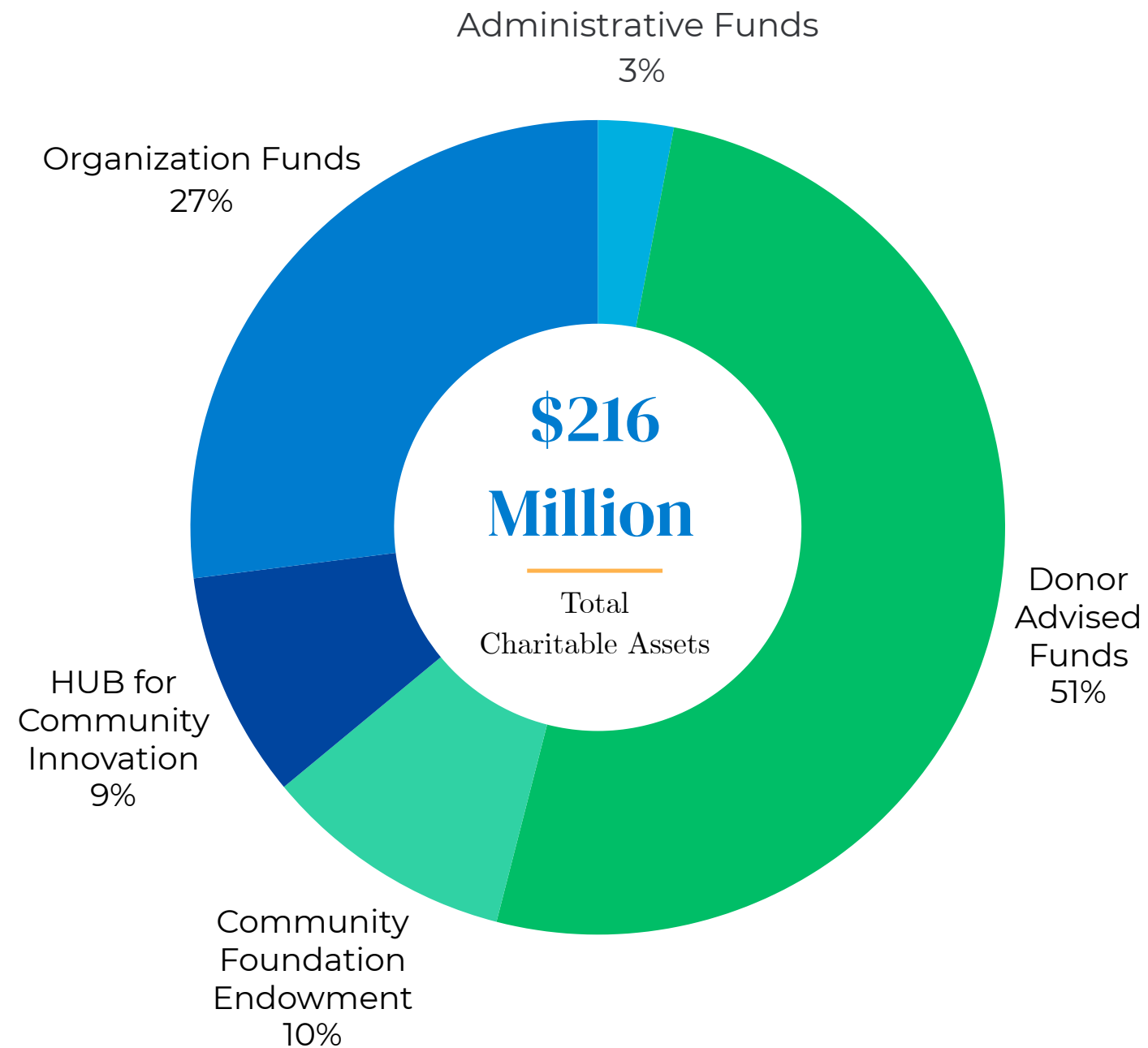
- ✓ Strong nonprofits create stronger communities
- ✓ Philanthropy can be a force for lasting change
- ✓ Collaboration amplifies impact
- ✓ Everyone has a role to play in building a thriving CSRA

**For Good, For Ever, For All.**



# HOW WE SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY

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## Connecting Charitable Resources to Community Impact

Today, the Community Foundation stewards more than \$216 million in charitable assets that support our region in a variety of ways.

Together, these resources allow us to connect generosity with opportunity and create lasting impact throughout the CSRA.


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# PROGRAMS TEAM: SUPPORTING NONPROFITS BEYOND COMMUNITY GRANTS



### SCHOLARSHIPS

Investing in students and the future of our community.




### CAPACITY BUILDING COHORT

A year-long learning community that equips nonprofit leaders with the knowledge, connections, and tools to strengthen their organizations and increase their impact.



### NONPROFIT SUMMIT

A day of learning, collaboration, and inspiration designed to equip nonprofit professionals with practical tools, fresh perspectives, and meaningful connections.



### IMPACTED NETWORKING

Connecting nonprofit professionals to share ideas and solve challenges together.



### LITERACY INITIATIVE

Supports efforts to improve reading proficiency and expand access to literacy resources in partner schools and communities.



### NONPROFIT ESSENTIALS TRAINING

Practical training for stronger organizations and greater impact.

### CANDID

Access trusted data, research funders, find grant opportunities - free through your local library!



### OTHER GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

-  St. Joseph Foundation
-  Mary Warren Fund
-  Sand Hills Garden Club
-  Augusta Bar Foundation
-  Vinea Foundation
-  Women in Philanthropy

Your Community Grants application may help us identify additional opportunities that align with your organization's mission and impact.

### Stay Connected!

Sign up for our newsletter.



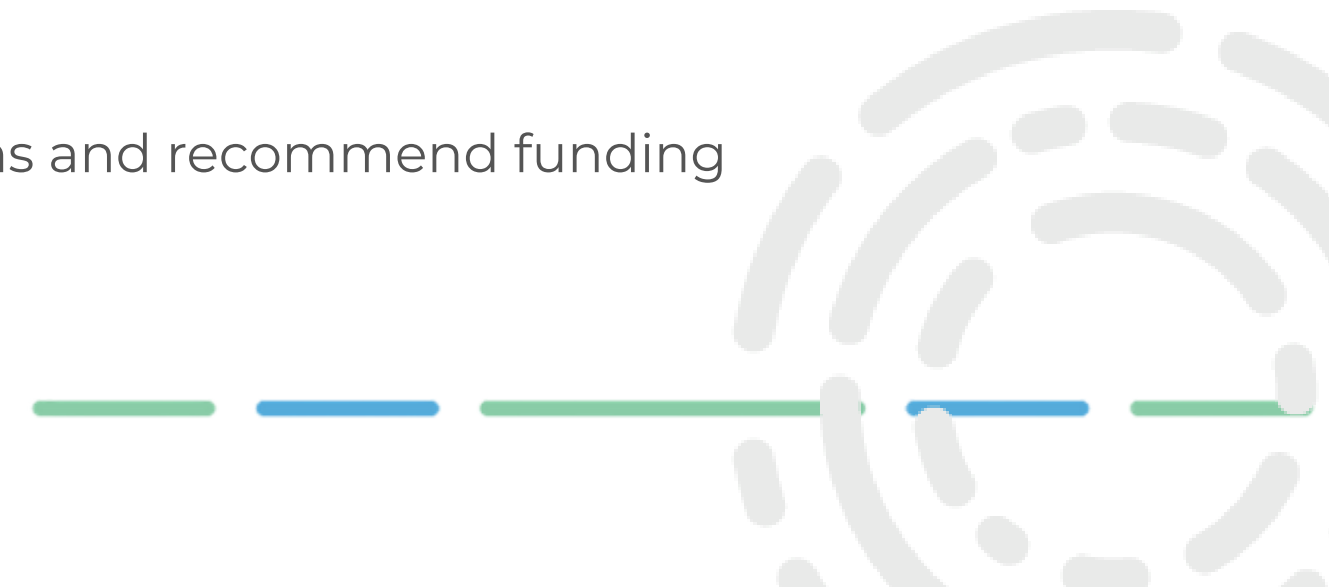
# WHAT ARE COMMUNITY GRANTS?

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**Community Grants, our legacy grant program, invests in nonprofit organizations that are creating opportunities, addressing barriers, and building stronger communities throughout the CSRA.**

## Program Highlights

- Annual competitive grant process
- Requests up to \$15,000
- Supported by the Community Foundation Endowment, which provides a permanent source of funding for nonprofit organizations serving our community.
- Volunteer-led panels, supported by Community Foundation staff, review applications and recommend funding based on community needs and the relative merit of proposals received.
- Focused on community needs across six counties





# WHY COMMUNITY GRANTS MATTER

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Through strategic, community-centered grantmaking, the Community Foundation invests in programs and services that:

- Address local challenges and community needs
- Expand access to opportunity
- Improve quality of life for individuals and families
- Create meaningful, measurable impact across our region

**Community Grants support nonprofits that are making a difference across the CSRA every day.**

## Community Grants are more than funding.

They are about partnering with organizations that are helping build stronger, healthier, and more vibrant communities.



# AREAS OF IMPACT

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## **Arts, Culture & Heritage**

Programs that support: Arts education/appreciation, cultural programming, historic preservation, public engagement, creative expression, and initiatives that strengthen community connection and heritage.



## **Education, Opportunity & Workforce Readiness**

Programs that support: Early learning, academic support, youth enrichment, mentoring, leadership development, life skills, workforce training, career readiness, and lifelong learning opportunities.



# AREAS OF IMPACT

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## **Health, Wellness & Resilience**

Programs that support: Physical and mental health, environmental stewardship, animal welfare, crisis response, healthy lifestyles, safety initiatives, and efforts that strengthen community resilience and quality of life.



## **Basic Needs & Stability**

Programs that support: Food access, housing stability, homelessness services and prevention, emergency assistance, transportation, family support, financial stability, and essential community services that help individuals and families achieve greater stability.



# UNDERSTANDING THE REVIEW PROCESS

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- Applications are reviewed by community volunteers and Foundation leadership.
- Reviewers consider community need, program impact, organizational capacity, and alignment with funding priorities.
- Community Grants are highly competitive, and funding requests typically exceed available resources.
- Not every deserving application can be funded.
- Clear, detailed, and outcome-focused applications help reviewers better understand your work and its impact.
- A funding decision is not a reflection of an organization's value or importance to the community.



# WHAT WE FUND—AND WHAT WE DON'T

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## We do fund:

Organizations that:

- ✓ Are recognized as 501(c)(3) public charities, public entities, or other charitable, educational, or cultural organizations
- ✓ Provide programs and services that directly benefit residents of Aiken, Burke, Columbia, Edgefield, McDuffie, or Richmond counties
- ✓ Program, project, and general operating support requests
- ✓ New and emerging organizations
- ✓ Requests up to \$15,000

**\*Only one application allowed per organization**

## We do not fund:

- Grants to individuals
- Capital Campaigns
- Deficit financing and debt retirement
- Endowments
- Political Organizations or campaigns
- Lobbying legislators or influencing elections
- Marketing as the entirety of your grant request
- Special fundraising events/celebrations
- Regranting
- Personal research
- Programs requiring faith-based participation
- Projects that are typically the funding responsibility of the government
- Scholarships to schools, colleges or universities outside of our six-county region
- Programs that have already taken place or will be completed in the current calendar year



# TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION

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## **Follow the Guidance**

Pay close attention to help notes, instructions, and eligibility requirements throughout the application.

## **Tell Your Story**

Use the Project Description to clearly explain the community need, who will benefit, and the impact you hope to achieve.

## **Connect Budget to Narrative**

Ensure your budget aligns with your proposal and clearly reflects how funds will be used.


## **Focus on Outcomes**

Describe the change you hope to create and how you will measure success. Strong outcomes are specific, measurable, and meaningful.

## **Highlight Partnerships**

Explain how your organization collaborates with others to strengthen services and avoid duplication of efforts.

### Additional Tips

- Keep your Organizational Profile up to date.
  - Take advantage of Early Review and post-cycle feedback opportunities.
  - Ask questions if you need assistance.
  - Remember: Clear, specific, and outcome-focused applications help reviewers better understand your organization's impact and community value.
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# WHAT REVIEWERS LOOK FOR

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## Strong Applications Often Demonstrate:

- ✓ A significant and documented community need
- ✓ Meaningful impact for individuals and/or the community
- ✓ Clear, measurable outcomes
- ✓ A budget that aligns with the request
- ✓ Organizational capacity to deliver results
- ✓ Collaboration and partnerships
- ✓ Support from volunteers, donors, and other resources
- ✓ Leveraging of other funding sources
- ✓ Approaches that help address root causes or create lasting change

## Your application should help reviewers understand:

- What community need is being addressed?
- Why is this work important?
- Who will benefit?
- How will grant funds be used?
- What outcomes or impact are expected?
- Why is your organization well-positioned to do this work?
- How will you measure success?

**Remember: Your review panel may have little or no prior knowledge of your organization. Assume reviewers are learning about your work for the first time.**



# WORDS MATTER: COMMUNICATING YOUR IMPACT

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Remember: Your review panel may have little or no prior knowledge of your organization.

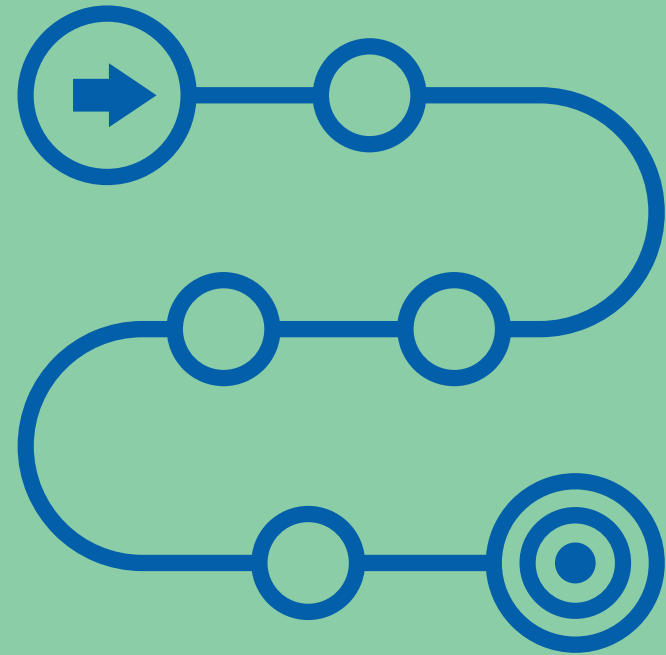
Assume reviewers are learning about your work for the first time. The strongest applications don't just explain what an organization does—they help reviewers understand the need being addressed, why the work matters, and the difference it makes in the community.

Clear, specific language can make a powerful difference in how your impact is understood.



# EARLY REVIEW PROCESS

Early Review Deadline:  
July 15 by 5:00 p.m.



## First-Time Applicants

Early Review Required

## Returning Applicants

Early Review Optional but  
Recommended



## Submit a complete application by the Early Review Deadline

- Complete all questions
  - Upload all required attachments in the **correct** fields
  - Review your application carefully before submitting
- BEST PRACTICE:** have another person proof your application!



## What Happens Next?

If changes are needed:

- Community Foundation staff will provide feedback.
- Your application will be returned to your organization in Draft status.
- You must make the requested updates and **resubmit before the final deadline.**

If no changes are needed:

- You will be notified that your application will move forward to the next phase of review.
- Your application will not be returned to you for further edits.



## Important Reminders

- Early Review is intended for **completed applications only.**
- **Do not submit an incomplete application expecting to finish it later.**
- Please carefully consider and address staff feedback.
- Failure to make requested revisions may affect your application's ability to advance through the review process.
- **Required for first-time applicants.** Optional, but encouraged, for returning applicants.

The Community Grants application serves as more than a funding request.

Through our work with donors, foundations, employee giving programs, and other grant opportunities, we are continually looking for ways to connect nonprofits with resources that align with their mission and impact.

### How It Helps

Information shared through the Community Grants application may help us:

- Identify organizations for additional funding opportunities
- Connect nonprofits with donor and employee giving programs
- Share opportunities through fundholder and community partnerships
- Consider organizations for capacity-building and nonprofit support initiatives

### Important

Submission of a Community Grants application does not guarantee consideration for or funding through other opportunities. However, the information you provide may help us identify additional opportunities that could be a good fit for your organization.

# ONE APPLICATION. MULTIPLE POSSIBILITIES.

**Think of the Community Grants application as an opportunity to maximize the relational capital of the Community Foundation.**



**Questions?**

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# OUTCOME

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**An outcome is the change that happens because of your program.**

It's not simply what you do or how many people participate—it's the difference your program makes in the lives of the people you serve.

## Why We Ask

Outcomes help reviewers understand:

- What success looks like
- What impact your organization hopes to achieve
- How grant funds will make a difference in the community
- And because funded organizations report on these outcomes later, it's important to choose outcomes that are meaningful, realistic, and measurable.



# OUTCOME EXAMPLES

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## **Example 1: Youth Mentoring Program**

Output: 75 middle and high school students will participate in mentoring sessions.

Outcome: 80% of participants will report increased confidence in setting and achieving personal goals.

Measurement: Improved attendance records

## **Example 2: Food Assistance Program**

Output: 500 households will receive emergency food assistance.

Outcome: 85% of participating households will report improved access to nutritious food during times of need.

Measurement: Client surveys and intake/follow-up interviews.

## **Example 3: Workforce Development Program**

Output: 50 unemployed adults will complete workforce training.

Outcome: 70% of participants will secure employment, an internship, or an industry-recognized credential within six months of program completion.

Measurement: Employment verification and participant follow-up.

## **Example 4: Literacy Program**

Output: 100 elementary students will participate in literacy tutoring.

Outcome: 75% of participants will improve reading proficiency by at least one grade level.

Measurement: Pre/post reading assessments.

## **Example 5: Senior Services**

Output: 150 seniors will participate in wellness and social engagement activities.

Outcome: 80% of participants will report reduced feelings of isolation and increased social connection.

Measurement: Increased attendance rates.

## **Example 6: Arts Education**

Output: 120 youth will participate in arts education workshops.

Outcome: 85% of participants will demonstrate increased knowledge, skills, or confidence in artistic expression.

Measurement: Instructor assessments and participant surveys.



# Budget Categories

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## **Personnel & Benefits**

Salaries, wages, payroll taxes, health insurance, retirement contributions, employee benefits

## **Professional Development**

Conferences, workshops, training programs, certifications, continuing education

## **Contract Services / Consultants**

Independent contractors, facilitators, evaluators, accountants, legal services, IT support

## **Program Expenses / Direct Services**

Program supplies, participant meals, transportation assistance, direct assistance, participant stipends, activity costs, field trips

## **Overhead Costs**

Rent, utilities, insurance, internet, office operations, administrative software

## **Equipment & Technology**

Computers, tablets, printers, projectors, software licenses, specialized equipment

## **Supplies & Materials**

Office supplies, books, curriculum, educational materials, consumable program supplies

## **Marketing / Communications**

Printing, advertising, website expenses, outreach materials, social media promotion

## **In-Kind Contributions**

Donated goods, donated professional services, donated space, volunteer services

## **Scholarships / Tuition Assistance**

Program-related scholarships, camp scholarships, workforce training assistance, participant tuition support

Note: Program-related scholarships and participant assistance are eligible. However, grant funds may not be used to establish or support standalone scholarship programs.



# SITE VISITS: YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO BRING YOUR APPLICATION TO LIFE



A strong application may lead to a site visit, where volunteer reviewers have the opportunity to see your work firsthand, ask questions, and better understand your organization's impact.

## If Selected for a Site Visit


- ✓ Demonstrate your program in action whenever possible
- ✓ Be prepared to discuss the community need, outcomes, and use of funds
- ✓ Share stories that illustrate your impact
- ✓ Introduce key staff, volunteers, participants, or partners when appropriate
- ✓ Ensure everyone attending understands the grant request and can speak about the program

## Remember:

**Your application introduces your organization. Your site visit helps reviewers see your impact, meet the people behind the work, and understand why your request matters.**

## Best Practice

The person who prepared the application should help prepare site visit participants and, when possible, attend the visit.



# WHY YOUTH GRANT REVIEW PANELS?

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## Building the Next Generation of Community Leaders

Youth panels provide students with a meaningful opportunity to learn about philanthropy, community needs, and the nonprofit organizations working to address them.

Through this experience, participants develop as:

- Future volunteers
- Future philanthropists
- Future nonprofit leaders
- Informed and engaged citizens

## Best Practice

**Treat youth panelists with the same professionalism and respect you would show any grant review panel.**

Their perspectives are valued, their recommendations matter, and they take their role seriously.

## How the Process Works

- ✓ Each youth panel is led by an experienced adult chair who guides participants throughout the review process.
- ✓ Youth panelists receive specialized training before beginning their reviews.
- ✓ Like adult panelists, youth volunteers:
  - Review grant applications
  - Participate in site visits
  - Discuss community needs and organizational impact
  - Make funding recommendations



# IF FUNDED: WHAT ARE THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?

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## Share Your Impact

Reporting helps us understand how grant funds were used and the difference they made in the community.

## Stories Matter

- Share participant stories, successes, and lessons learned.
- Include quality photos whenever possible.
- Help us understand the people behind the numbers.

## Reporting Schedule

### Mid-Year Report

- Due July 15

### Final Report

- Due January 15

Exception: If your grant supports a one-time purchase or a summer-only program that is completed before the new school year begins—and all outcomes have been achieved—you may only be required to submit a final report.

## Important Reminders

- ✓ All reports and grant agreements are completed through the Grants Portal.
- ✓ Email reminders will be sent approximately 14 days before a report is due.
- ✓ Current grantees must submit all required reports before new grant funds can be distributed, even if the reporting deadline has not yet passed.



# 2027 COMMUNITY GRANTS TIMELINE



**July 1**  
Application Opens

**July 15 at 5:00 p.m.**  
Early Review Deadline

- Required for first-time applicants
- Optional for returning applicants
- Complete applications receive staff feedback and may be returned for revisions

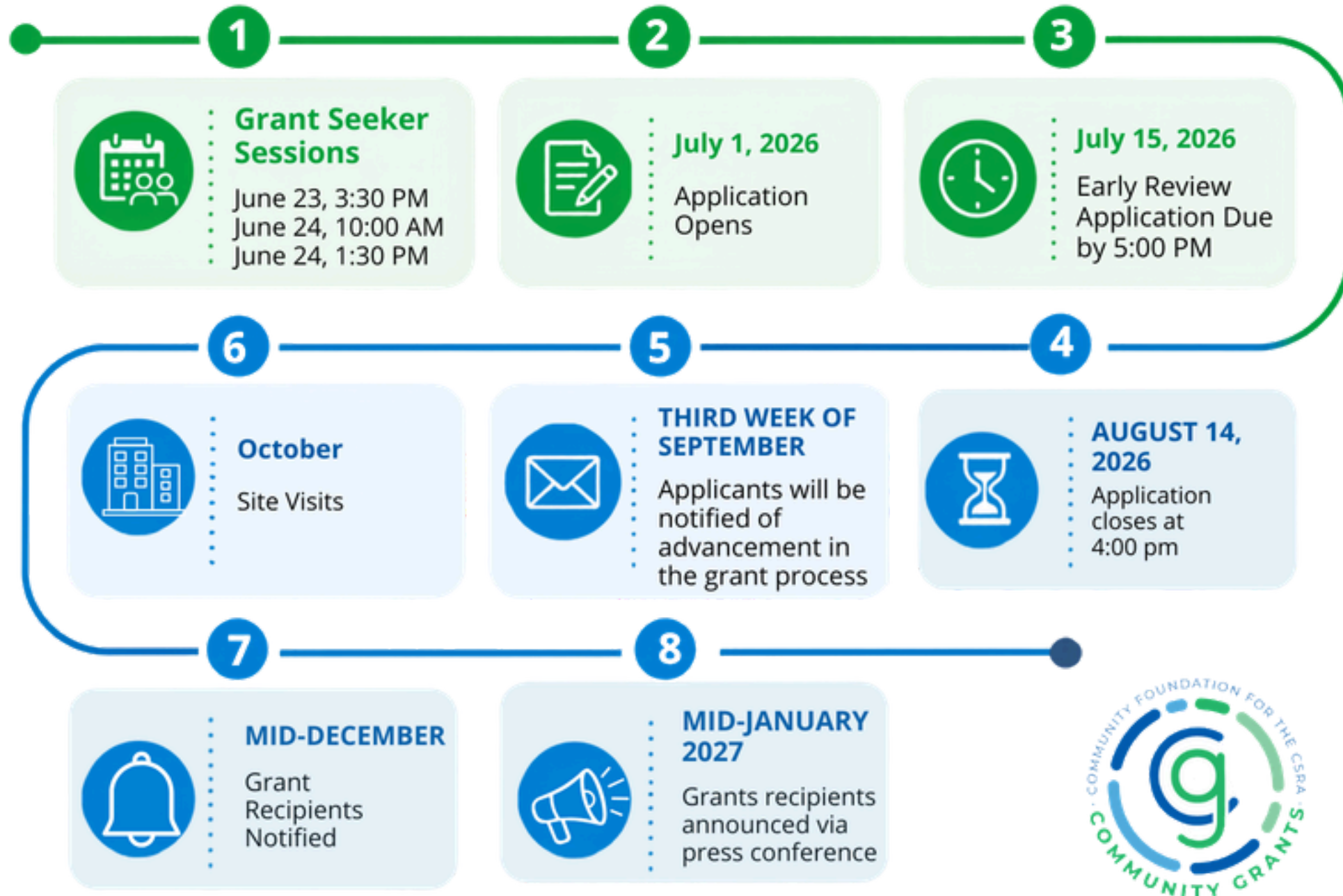
**August 14 at 4:00 p.m.**  
Final Application Deadline

- Applications are reviewed by Community Foundation staff
- Eligible applications move forward for committee consideration

**September**  
Grants Committee Review

- Staff recommendations are reviewed
- Organizations are selected for panel site visits

# 2027 COMMUNITY GRANTS TIMELINE



## October

### Site Visits

- Volunteer review panels conduct site visits between October 1 and October 31

## November

### Funding Recommendations

- Panels submit recommendations
- Grants Committee reviews and approves final recommendations

## December

### Board Approval & Award Notifications

- Community Foundation Board affirms recommendations
- Applicants are notified of funding decisions

## January

### Celebration & Grant Distribution

- Community Grants Celebration and public announcement
- Grant funds distributed by the end of January

**Questions?**

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# THE PROGRAM TEAM

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Lasima Turmon  
Director of Programs  
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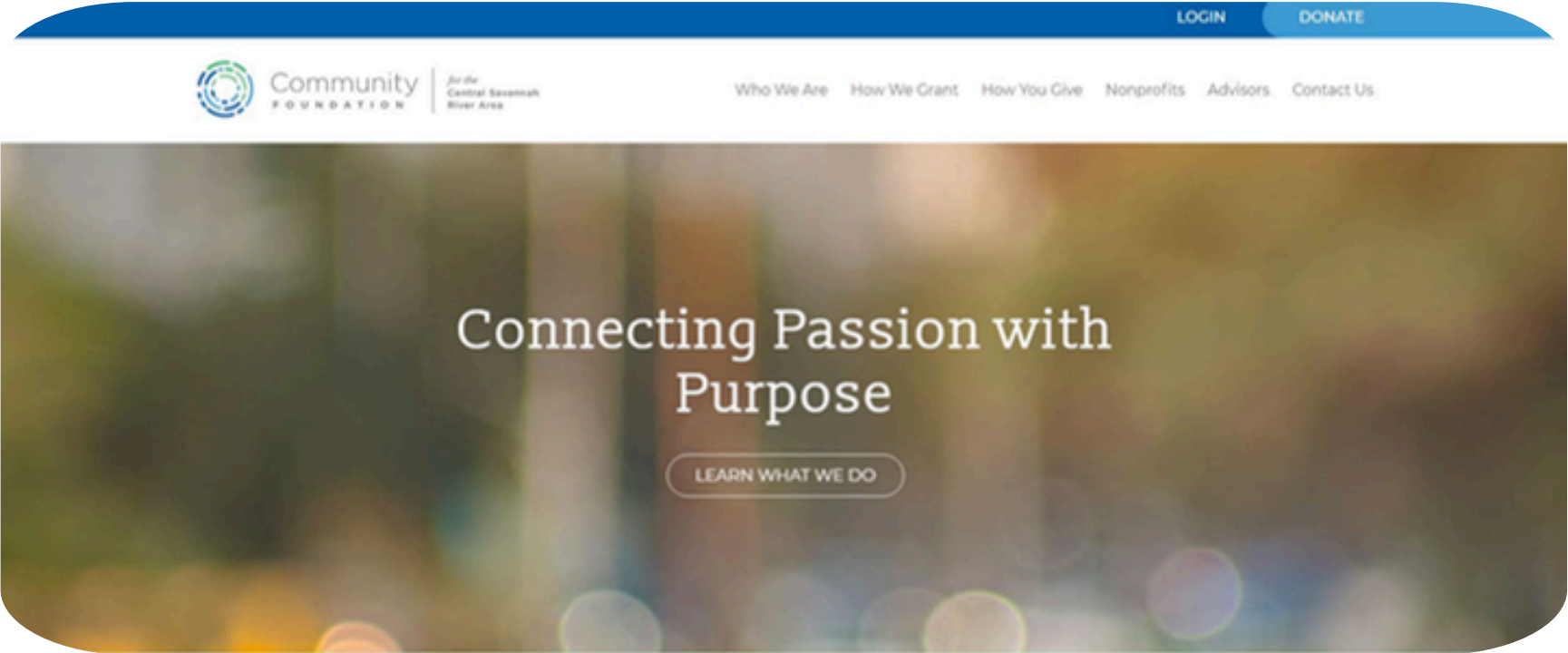
Erin Cooper  
Sr. Program Officer  
erincooper@cfcsra.org



# Using the Grants Portal

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- Visit cfcsra.org
- Click LOGIN
- Click Access Grant Portal (blue button)
- Enter your login credentials and sign in
- From your Applicant Dashboard, click Apply
- Locate the 2027 Community Grants Program
- Click Apply to begin your application



## New Organization?

You will need to create a new organizational profile to include contacts before starting your application.

All future applications that are completed in our Grants Portal will be linked to the organization.


## New Employee, Existing Organization Profile?

Contact Erin to be added to your organizational profile.



# Using the Grants Portal



- All application-related communications will be sent through the Grants Portal to the contact person and email address listed on your application. **Please ensure this information remains current.**
  - Add administrator@grantinterface.com to your safe sender list. Application updates, reminders, and other system notifications will be sent from this email address.
  - All application materials, attachments, agreements, and reports should be submitted through the Grants Portal. Please do not email or mail documents directly to Community Foundation staff.
  - Your organization's portal account serves as a permanent record of your activity with the Community Foundation, including applications, awards, reports, and agreements.
  - In addition to Community Grants, the portal hosts applications for other funding opportunities, including Augusta Bar Foundation, Sand Hills Garden Club, St. Joseph Foundation, Vinea Foundation, and Women in Philanthropy.
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# Using the Grants Portal

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## Need to collaborate with your team?

The Collaborate feature allows multiple people to work on the same application.

To add a collaborator:

1. Click Collaborate
2. Enter the collaborator's email address
3. Add a message or instructions (optional)
4. Select a permission level:
  - View – Can view the application
  - Edit – Can view and edit the application
  - Submit – Can view, edit, and submit the application

**Tip: Consider adding program staff, finance staff, or board members who may help complete narrative, budget, or attachment requirements.**

## Important

Permissions apply to all forms associated with the request, including applications, follow-up forms, reports, and agreements.

Need to Make Changes?

You can return to the Collaborate feature at any time to:

- Resend an invitation
- Change permissions
- Add a collaborator
- Remove a collaborator

