

2027 COMMUNITY GRANTS PANEL TRAINING

One Million Threads. One Shared Mission



Community

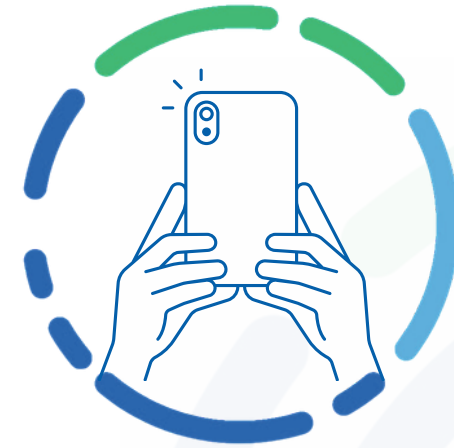
F O U N D A T I O N

for the

Central Savannah River Area

Established 1996

HOUSEKEEPING



NEWSLETTER SIGN UP

WHO IS THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION?

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



OUR MISSION

To Engage, Inform, and Inspire

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

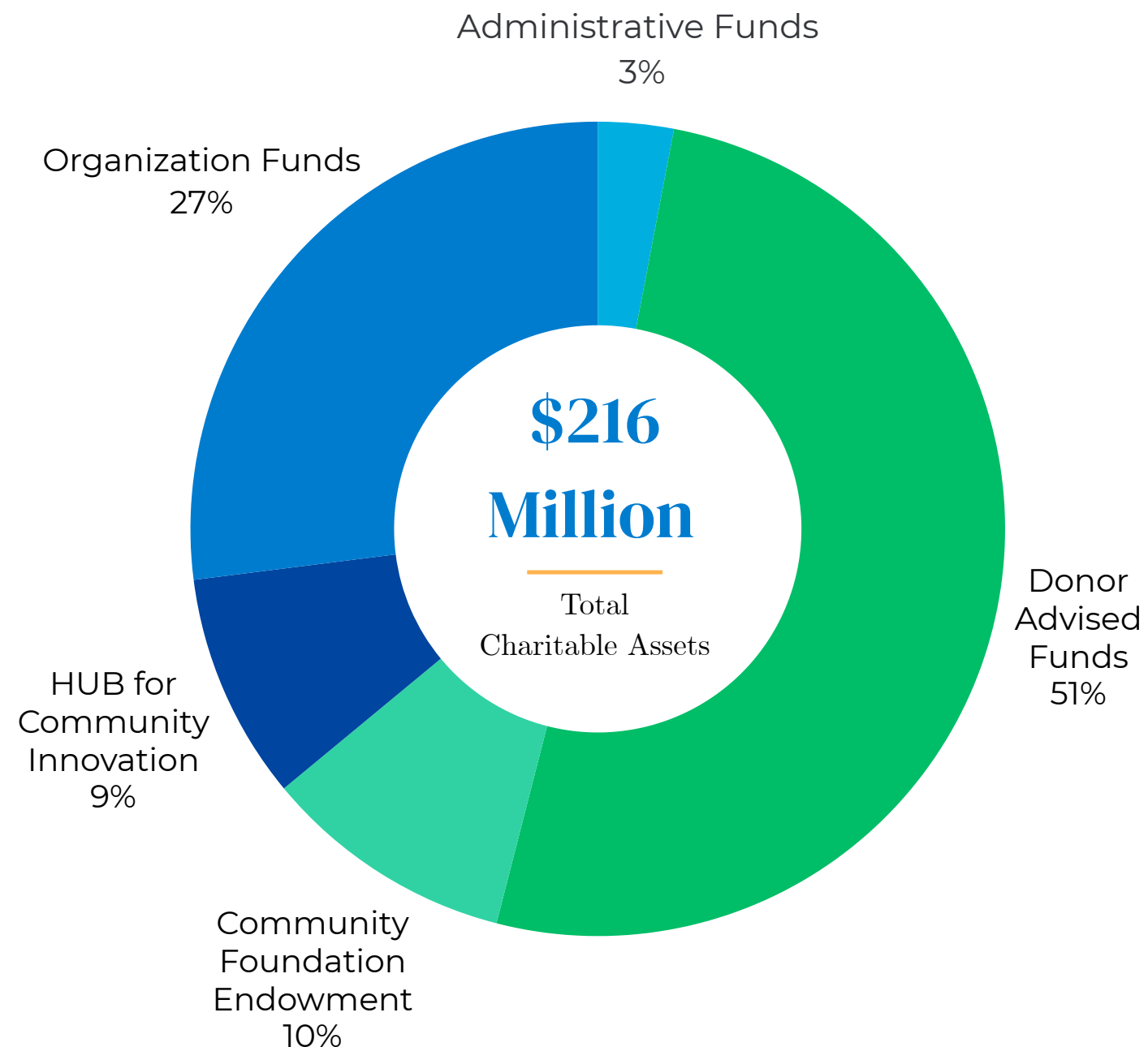
We believe:

- ✓ 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



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.

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!

Candid.

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.

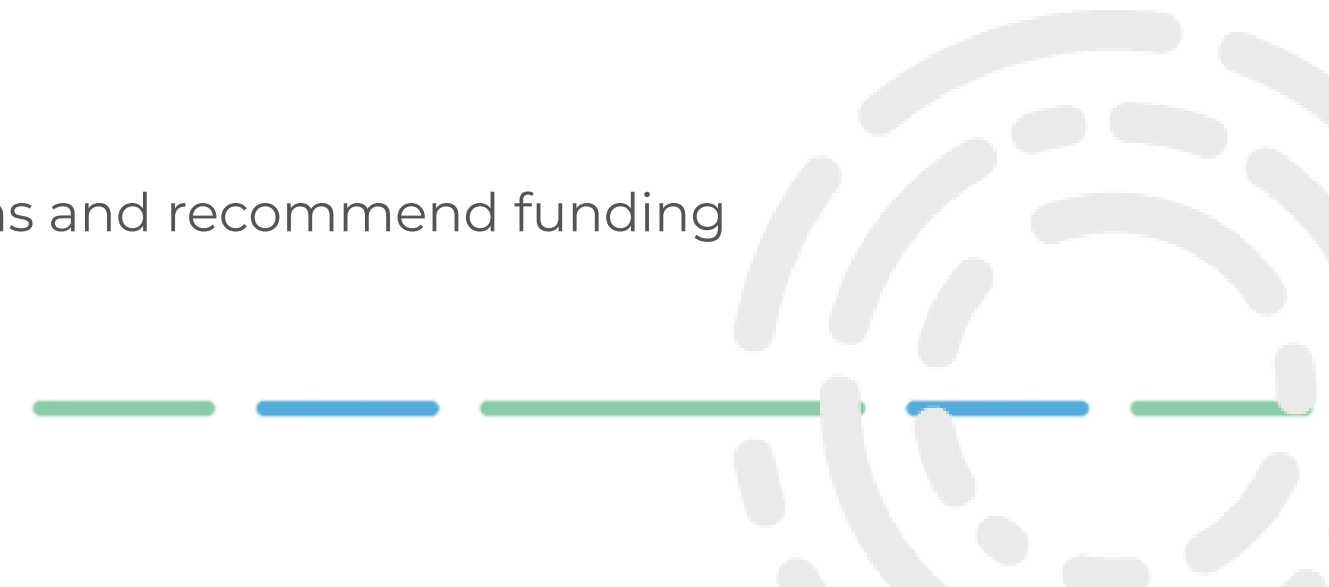


WHAT ARE COMMUNITY GRANTS?

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.
- Focused on community needs across six counties
- Volunteer-led panels, supported by Community Foundation staff, review applications and recommend funding based on community needs and the relative merit of proposals received.





WHY COMMUNITY GRANTS MATTER

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.



WHY COMMUNITY GRANTS MATTER

We have incredible Nonprofits but they cannot meet growing community needs alone.

Every year, organizations across the CSRA request significantly more funding than we can award.

184

2027 APPLICATIONS

Requests for funding submitted through our online portal.

\$2.7 M
2027 REQUESTED

The total amount requested from the Community Foundation.

\$736K
2026 FUNDED

Awarded in 2026 to strengthen our communities.

That means over 1.9 MILLION in good ideas couldn't happen.

WHY WE ARE ASKING FOR HELP

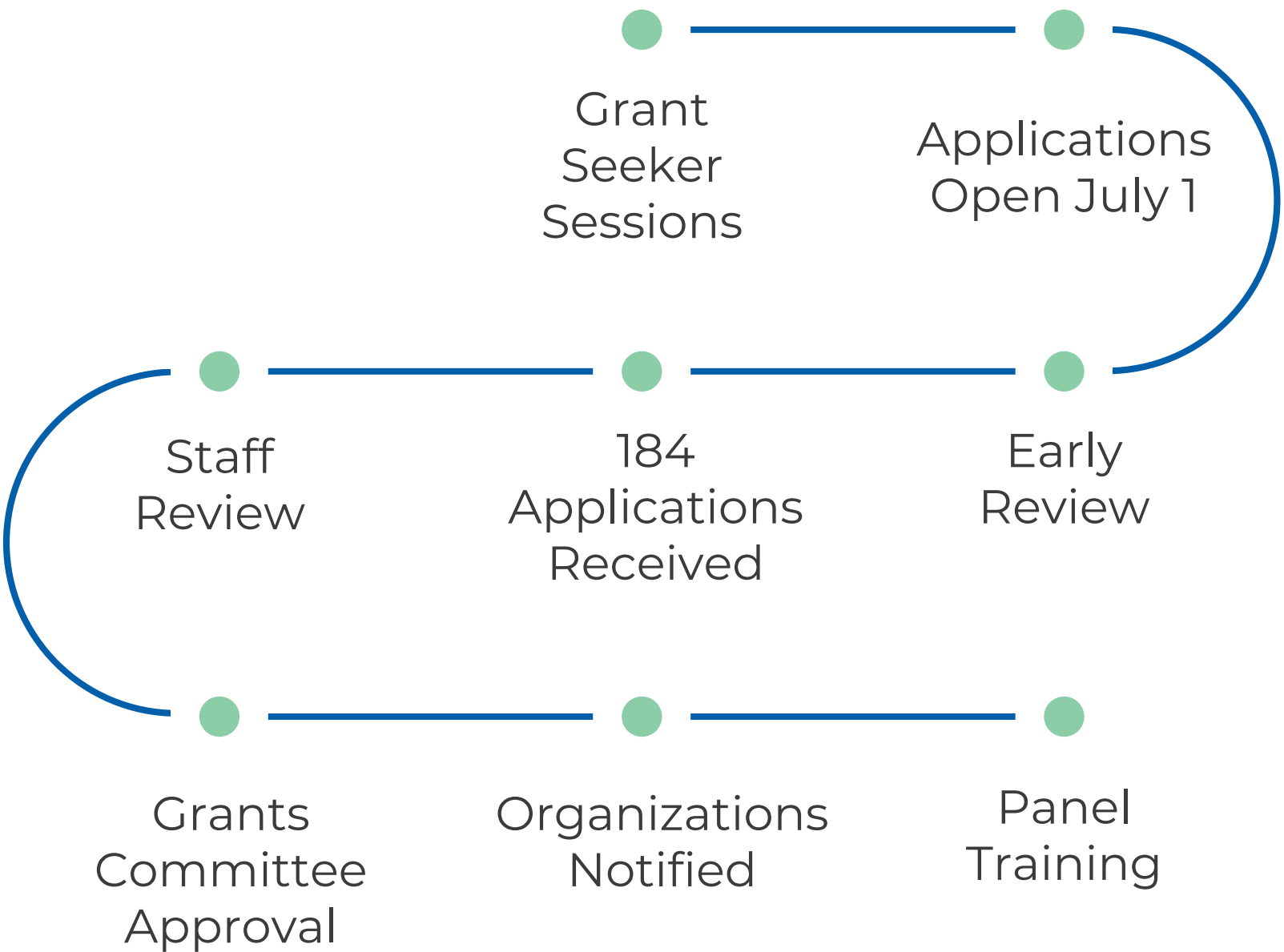
Because we don't want to keep saying no..

**WE WANT TO GRANT
\$1 MILLION**



HOW WE GOT HERE

By the time an organization reaches your panel, its application has already moved through several stages of review.



Your Timeline

September

Training + Panel Assignments
Start scheduling site visits

October

Read applications + Conduct site visits

By October 30 at noon

Evaluations/rankings due

November

Grants Committee reviews panel recommendations

December

Board Approval & Applicant Notifications

January

Community Grants Celebration & Grant Distribution

YOUR ROLE AS A PANELIST

READ

Review each assigned application and understand the specific request.

VISIT

Participate in site visits to learn more, ask questions and see the work firsthand.

EVALUATE

Use the established criteria to evaluate each request.

DISCUSS

Share your perspective and participate in the panel's discussion.

RECOMMEND

Work together to develop funding recommendations.

Organizations assigned to your panel have already completed staff and Grants Committee review and have been selected to advance to the site-visit phase.

PANEL MEMBER VS. PANEL CHAIR

All Panel Members:

- ✓ Read assigned applications
- ✓ Attend as many site visits as possible
- ✓ Prepare and ask questions
- ✓ Complete evaluations
- ✓ Participate in final discussion and recommendations

Panel Chair:

- ✓ Coordinate site visits
- ✓ Serve as the primary point of contact
- ✓ Confirm at least 3 panelists for each visit
- ✓ Help keep site visits on track
- ✓ Keep panelists informed and on schedule
- ✓ Facilitate the panel's final discussion
- ✓ Record/submit the panel's final recommendations

The Chair is a coordinator and facilitator—not the decision-maker.



AREAS OF IMPACT



Arts, Culture & Heritage

Arts education and appreciation, cultural programming, historic preservation, public engagement, creative expression, and community connection.



Health, Wellness & Resilience

Physical and mental health, environmental stewardship, animal welfare, crisis response, healthy lifestyles, safety, resilience, and quality of life.



Education, Opportunity & Workforce Readiness

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



Basic Needs & Stability

Food access, housing stability, homelessness services and prevention, emergency assistance, transportation, family support, financial stability, and essential community services.



WHAT ARE YOU EVALUATING?

Community Need and Potential Impact

Is there a meaningful need, and could the proposed work make a difference?

Strength and Clarity of the Request

What are we being asked to fund, and does the proposed use make sense?

Budget & Financial Stewardship

Is the budget reasonable, and does the organization demonstrate responsible stewardship?

Organizational Capacity & Proposed Approach

Does the organization have the experience, resources, planning, and approach to carry out the work?

Outcomes & Measurability

What is expected to change, and how will success be measured?

Partnerships & Collaboration

Do appropriate partnerships or collaborative relationships support the work?

Look at the request as a whole. No single factor—number served, organizational size, other funding, partnerships, or volunteer support—should determine your evaluation.



CHECKING OUR BIAS

Common Types of Bias

Beauty Bias

Allowing writing style, presentation quality, facilities, or marketing materials to outweigh substance

Affinity Bias

Favoring organizations, causes, or people that feel familiar to us (first impressions and familiarity)

Halo/Horns Bias

Allowing one especially positive or negative impression to influence the entire evaluation

Confirmation Bias

Looking for information that reinforces what we already believe (most common based on our own beliefs)

Contrast Bias

Judging one organization primarily in comparison with another rather than against the evaluation criteria (big v. little, established v. new, deep v. wide, etc.)



Bigger isn't always better. More people served doesn't automatically mean greater impact—and serving fewer people doesn't make a request less valuable.



IS A SITE VISIT IMPORTANT?

You Are Our Eyes & Ears

- An application only tells part of the story. The site visit is where you help us see the full picture.
- 184 applications received; 168 advanced to a site visit after staff review.
- This is the nonprofit's opportunity to answer your questions and make its case for funding.
- We've asked each organization to come prepared and ensure everyone attending understands the grant request.
- What you see, hear, and learn during the visit matters. Your insight helps guide our final funding decisions.

The site visit gives you an opportunity to:

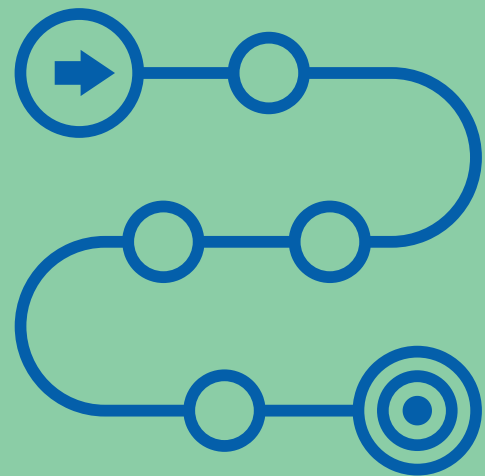
- ✓ Clarify questions from the application
- ✓ Better understand the community need and people served
- ✓ Hear the organization explain the proposed work
- ✓ Assess capacity and readiness
- ✓ Understand what difference Community Grants funding could make
- ✓ Gain context that a written application cannot fully provide

The application introduces the organization. The site visit brings the request to life.



SITE VISIT LOGISTICS

- **All site visits must take place during October**
- **Make initial contact by Friday, October 2**
- **Please be flexible and provide the nonprofits with more than one option for a site visit.**



Scheduling takes flexibility from everyone.

- Chairs coordinate scheduling with organizations and panel members
- At least three panelists should participate in each visit
- Visits are generally about one hour, plus travel time
- Attend as many of your panel's visits as possible
- Respond promptly when your Chair requests availability
- Let your Chair know as soon as possible if your availability changes



Make the most of the site visit

DO

- Come prepared and familiar with the application
- Ask thoughtful, relevant questions
 - Be consistent with the questions asked of each organization
- Listen and allow the organization to tell its story
- Take notes
- Ask for clarification when something is unclear
- Be respectful of the organization's time

AVOID

- Making promises or discussing the likelihood of funding
- Comparing the organization to others on your panel
- Asking for unnecessary additional materials
- Dominating the conversation
- Letting one impressive or concerning detail drive your entire evaluation

OTHER SITE VISIT TIPS

Make sure you have enough panel members

At least three panelists must attend each site visit. If fewer than three are available, reschedule or contact our team.

Additional information is okay

Organizations may provide additional information that helps your panel better understand the request. Do not require additional materials or penalize an organization for not providing them.

No location? We can help.

If an organization does not have a meeting space, you may hold the site visit at the Foundation. Contact us as soon as possible to reserve space.

In-person visits are the expectation

Virtual site visits are generally not permitted. Any exception must be approved by the Programs team in advance.

Please be aware that we also receive feedback from our nonprofits' experience with their panel.

You are an extension of the Community Foundation for the next few weeks, and we only want positive experiences all around.



COMPLETING YOUR EVALUATIONS



Every panelist completes an evaluation for every organization assigned to the panel.

- Complete the application-based section for every organization.
- Complete the site visit section based on what you personally observed.
- If you did not attend a site visit, select N/A for those questions.
- Complete your evaluation using the established criteria and your own assessment of the request.

Final Panel Ranking

After site visits are complete, the panel will discuss the requests together and determine its final funding order — first choice, second choice, third choice, and so on.

First and second choices are recommended for funding.



Panel Chair — After Final Discussion

Record the panel's final funding order

First Choice, Second Choice, etc.

Select the panel's Overall Merit rating

Exceptional, strong, moderate, limited, weak

Provide final panel comments

Strengths, concerns, or considerations

Record constructive feedback to share with the organization

Feedback, comments, or suggestions



Questions?



SCENARIO 1

Organization A

- Application is not professionally done
- Attachments have mistakes
- Site visit blows you away

Organization B

- Professionally done application
- Words jump off the page with their impact
- Site visit is done by a staff person with little enthusiasm or knowledge



SCENARIO 2

Organization A

- Small organization
- Serves a large number of people, with each person receiving services once or twice during the year
- Provides multiple services
 - IDs
 - Bus vouchers
 - Clothing and food

Organization B

- Small Organization
- Narrow demographic
- Works with 20 people per year
- Has a job skills training program with 80% success rate for long term self-sufficiency

SCENARIO 3

Organization A

- Provides mental health services to the uninsured
- Grant request is for counselor salaries and utility costs
- Medium-sized organization
- Has a small endowment

Organization B

- Grant request is for summer camp scholarships for low-income children
- Also has an incredible at-risk teen leadership program that they talk about, but they are not asking for funds for that program
- Medium-sized organization

SCENARIO 4

Organization A

- Small grassroots passionate organization
- One paid staff person
- Mostly run by volunteers
- Provide food and social gatherings within a targeted community for seniors in need

Organization B

- Nationally known organization
- Highly qualified paid staff
- Some volunteers
- Serving large numbers of people per year with multiple basic needs

DEADLINES

Wednesday, September 23 by noon

Last call for conflicts of interest

Monday, September 28 through Friday, October 2

Panel chairs make initial contact with nonprofits and begin scheduling site visits.

Friday, Oct 30 by noon

All evaluations are due to CFCSRA

Thursday, January 14

Press conference/Announcement of grant recipients (you're all invited!)



Using the Grants Portal

How Do I Get Started?

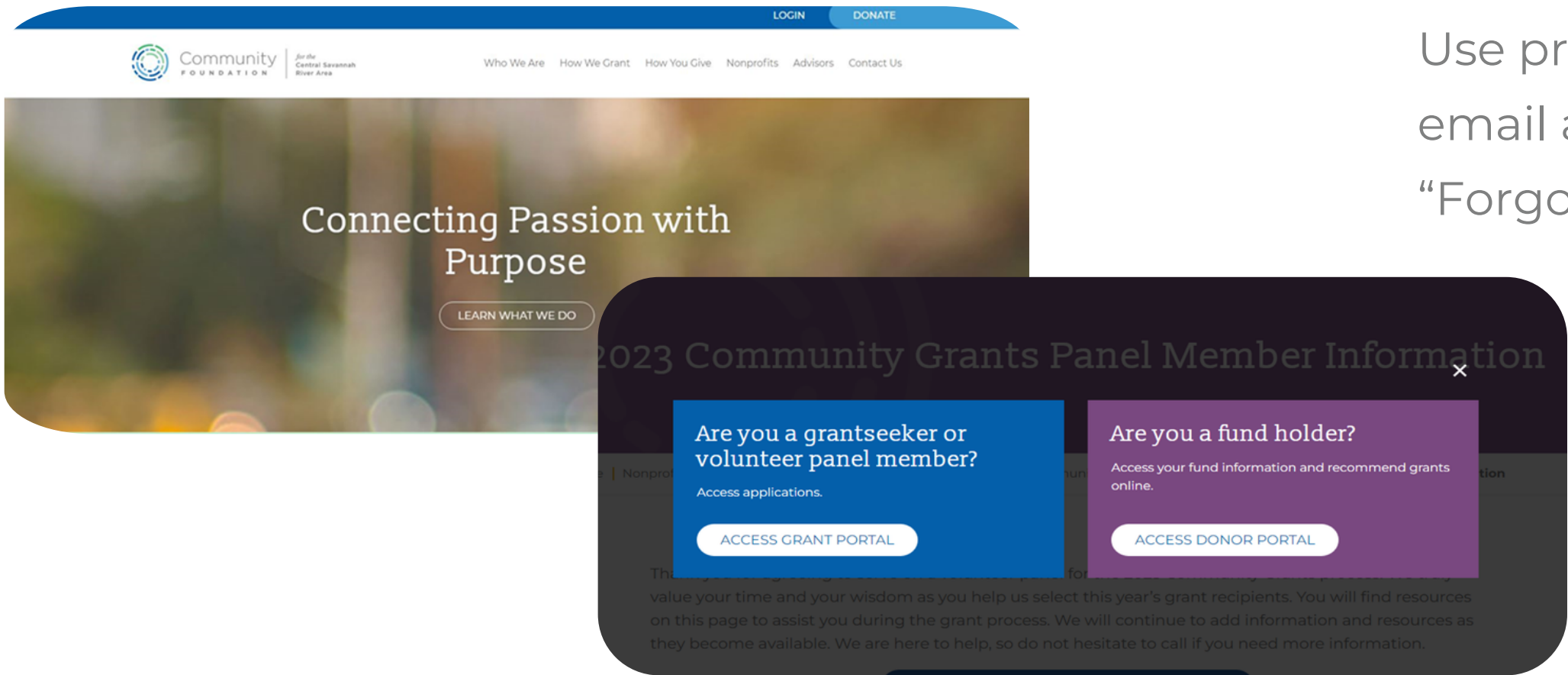
- Visit cfcsra.org
- Click LOGIN
- Click Access Grant Portal (blue button)
- Enter your login credentials and sign in

New Panelist?

Do not create a new account!
One has been created for you with the email address you provided on your panel registration form. Enter your email address and click “Forgot your password?” to create a unique password.

Returning Panelists

Use previous credentials. If you provided a different email address this year or forgot your password, click “Forgot your password?” to regain access.



Using the Grants Portal

Evaluator Dashboard

- Your Dashboard will show the applications assigned to your panel.
- To begin your evaluation, click Start.
- Save your responses.
- You may return to the evaluation throughout the process.

Dashboard

Your Evaluations 12

Your Follow Ups 0

Pending9

Draft1

Complete2

Quick Search

FORM	PROCESS	ORGANIZATION	APPLICANT FIRST NAME	APPLICANT LAST NAME	PROJECT	SCORE	
 Staff Evaluation - Spring	Spring Grant Process	Arc of the US	Nathan	Murphy	Creating creative awareness	57%	Update✔
 Staff Evaluation - Spring	Spring Grant Process	Boys & Girls Clubs of America	Arthur	Mitchell	General operating support and facility improvements	57%	Update✔
 Staff Evaluation - Spring	Spring Grant Process	World Wildlife Fund, Inc.	Juan	Taylor	Conservation operations support		Start❗
 Staff Evaluation - Spring	Spring Grant Process	International Association of Fire Fighters	Joshua	Smith	General Operating support		Start❗
 Staff Evaluation - Spring	Spring Grant Process	Direct Relief	Abigail	Clark	No needles here- drug addiction recovery community support		Start❗
 Staff Evaluation - Spring	Spring Grant Process	Covenant House	Douglas	Smith	Community Closet		Start❗
 Staff Evaluation - Spring	Spring Grant Process	Global Peace Film Festival, Inc.	Richard	Robinson	Lodging for Filmmakers		Start❗



Questions?



THE PROGRAM TEAM



Lasima Turmon
Director of Programs
lasimaturmon@cfcsra.org



Erin Cooper
Sr. Program Officer
erincooper@cfcsra.org