



LGBTQ Fund of Mississippi Small Grants Program

Guidelines and Information for Applicants Effective as of June 2023

Goal and Purposes of the Small Grants Program

Goal: The LGBTQ Fund of Mississippi's Small Grants Program, which receives resources from a fund held at the Community Foundation for Mississippi, supports efforts aligned with the vision, mission, and beliefs defined by the Advisory Board of the Fund (see the Fund's website – www.lgbtqfundms.org – for vision, mission, belief statements).

Purposes: Funding is available to support planning, research, and general operations that address priority needs of LGBTQ Mississippians as they strive to live safely, openly and without alienation, isolation, prejudice and/or discrimination.

Special attention will be paid to the following: **(1)** proposals demonstrating a commitment to addressing the needs of Mississippi's most demonstrably underserved LGBTQ communities, including (but not limited to) communities of color, youth, seniors, and persons in rural communities; **(2)** intersectional programs addressing faith and acceptance; and **(3)** efforts serving transgender and gender non-conforming persons.

Eligible Applicants: Applicants for grants from the LGBTQ Fund of Mississippi include the following:

- 1) nonprofit organizations with current tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code and in compliance with the Mississippi Secretary of State's charity registration, fee payment, audit (if required), and reporting requirements;
- 2) units of local government (including schools, school districts, public-private partnerships, and quasi-governmental entities);
- 3) research centers (independent and those associated with universities);
- 4) public and private institutions of higher learning; and
- 5) federally recognized Indian tribes.

Note: In special situations, small grant funds to non-501(c)(3) organizations may be considered, but in order to do this, there are special expenditure responsibility requirements that must be met. Therefore, small grant requests from non-501(c)(3) entities will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Please check the Campaign for Southern Equality's website (see link below) for more information about how to apply for these start-up grants -- You do not need 501(c)(3) status to apply. Check this page for updates: <https://southernequality.org/our-work/southern-equality-fund/>.

Finally, if your effort is not IRS certified as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and you are not interested in becoming a nonprofit organization, you can work with an existing nonprofit to be a *fiscal sponsor* for your work. Should you have this arrangement with a fiscal sponsor, the sponsoring organization would submit a grant proposal on behalf of your effort, and the sponsoring organization would be considered the grantee. The sponsoring organization would also be responsible for ensuring accountability for the use of funds and fulfilling reporting requirements. For more information about fiscal sponsorships, please contact Sammy Moon at 443-562-6363.

Geographic Area: Applicants must be in Mississippi or provide services that have a positive direct impact on Mississippi's LGBTQ population.

Threshold Factors: Applicants must submit, along with a proposal, their IRS letter designating their 501(c)(3) status and documentation of compliance with the requirements of the Mississippi Secretary of State.

Each application must be signed by an appropriate individual with the authority to submit such an application on behalf of the nonprofit applicant. Applications must be completed and submitted in a timely manner.

If the submitting organization's general operating budget is \$100,000 or more a 25% match to the requested amount is required. The match may be in cash or in-kind. If the organization's general operating budget is less than \$100,000 no match is required AND no match is required for a planning or research request. Successful applicants will be required to enter into a grant agreement that will note any required legal assurances and certifications.

Eligible Activities: It is the intent of the LGBTQ Fund of Mississippi to provide grants that are most helpful and least restrictive for grantees. Therefore, grants for purposes other than planning and research will be for general operations, thereby allowing the grantee to determine the best use of the funding.

Given these broad, inclusive parameters, funding priorities are guided by information from multiple sources, most significantly from the comprehensive, statewide needs assessment completed under the auspices of Mississippi State University's Institutional Review Board.

Utilizing the information above, funding priorities have been established and Requests for Proposals will be issued focused on those priorities; however, should there be a compelling reason and/or emergency outside the identified priority issues, the Grants Committee may consider proposals beyond the scope of its identified priorities. (The Grants Committee also has the authority to recommend grant amounts exceeding the stated funding limits *if* there is a compelling need to do so and the need is well-documented. These cases are the exception rather than the rule.)

Important Note: An executive summary of the statewide needs assessment along with the identified priorities eligible for funding are available on the Fund's website www.lgbtqfundms.org. Please review this information prior to submitting a proposal.

Ineligible Activities: Grant funds may not be used for the following purposes:

- 1) acquisition of any interest in real property;
- 2) grants to support ongoing annual fundraising campaigns, capital campaigns, endowments or scholarships;
- 3) grants to individuals or to an entity for a specific individual's benefit; or,
- 4) grants to individual donors, advisors, and/or related parties.

| <u>GRANT INFORMATION</u> | | |
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| GRANT TYPE | MAX AWARD | PURPOSE/EXAMPLES |
| *Planning | \$5000 max | <p>Purpose: Develop a sound, strategic approach to an opportunity/challenge.</p> <p><i>Examples: Needs assessments, vision/mission/values development, community conversations to inform mission/strategies/programs, strategic planning efforts, fund-raising plan development, organizational development assessments.</i></p> |
| **General Operations | \$15,000 max | <p>Purpose: Support the creation of an organization, general operations, and/or capacity building.</p> <p><i>Examples: Creation of a new 501c3 organization; attorney and/or accounting fees related to organizational start-up; leadership, staff, and volunteer recruitment, training, and/or retention efforts; organizational development assessment and technical assistance; communications, branding, and/or public relations assessment and plan development; evaluation; technology needs/support; collaboration leadership/participation; general program operating expenses.</i></p> |
| ***Research | \$10,000 max | <p>Purpose: Support research project(s) that address a priority identified in the statewide needs assessment.</p> <p><i>Examples: Research to enhance understanding and knowledge that contribute to the well-being of Mississippi's LGBTQ citizens.</i></p> |

*An organization can apply for more than one planning grant in a 12-month period by requesting an amendment to the original planning grant, but the total amount received cannot exceed \$5,000.

**An organization may submit one or more proposals for general operating funds, but the total amount requested cannot exceed \$15,000 in a 12-month period.

***An organization may submit one or more proposals for research, but the total amount requested cannot exceed \$10,000 in a 12-month period

Application and Submission Information and Process

An application packet and required forms may be downloaded from the LGBTQ Fund of Mississippi's website at www.lgbtqfundms.org/grants/

Pre-Application Assistance: A virtual informational meeting will be offered to those interested in submitting a proposal to the Fund. The purpose is for the Grants Committee to explain the work of the Fund, the grant requirements, the funding guidelines, and the RFP process. There will also be time for questions and discussion from potential grantees.

In addition to the informational meeting, representatives from the Fund will be available at any time during the RFP process should there be follow-up questions. Potential grantees can contact Michael Martella at grants@lgbtqfundms.org with questions related to proposal development and/or submission.

Content and Form of Application: Each proposal will consist of a cover sheet, brief narrative statement (not to exceed 1 page), budget form, budget narrative, and any attachments necessary to provide documentation of eligibility or to support the narrative statement. Supplementary materials might include documentation of registration with the Mississippi Secretary of State, a letter of determination from the IRS, and/or a letter of support from a fiscal sponsor.

Deadlines: Proposals will be accepted during the time specified in the RFP, but emergency proposals can be submitted anytime. The funding limitations described above will be applicable, and proposals should be submitted according to the deadlines noted in the RFP.

The proposal review and decision-making period is 90 days from the official submission deadline. (Note: The review process may be completed in less than 90 days, but applicants should be aware that the review committee has 90 days to complete its work.)

Submission Method: Applications and supporting materials may be submitted electronically through the Fund's website.

Format and Copies: Only one copy of the full application is required. Submit only those forms and required narrative statements included with the application packet and described above. Please do not submit video materials, generic brochures or other promotional materials, or electronic media.

Application Review Process

Initial Review: Staff, volunteers, and/or consultant(s) representing the LGBTQ Fund of Mississippi will perform an initial examination of all applications to determine conformance with these guidelines and applicable threshold factors. If an application does not conform with the guidelines and/or threshold factors, applicants may be contacted and given an opportunity to correct any non-conforming aspects of their applications.

Evaluation of Proposals: After staff, volunteers and/or consultant(s) representing the LGBTQ Fund of Mississippi have completed a review of applications, the proposals will be reviewed by the Fund's Grants Committee. Final funding recommendations will then be presented to the Advisory Board and the Community Foundation Board for review.

Additional Factors: The LGBTQ Fund of Mississippi retains discretionary authority to recommend the funding of all or any part of any application. Full funding of every proposal is not assured.

Grant Awards and Requirements Process

The final recommendation(s) from the Grants Committee will be forwarded to the Fund's Advisory Board and the Community Foundation's Board for final action. After final action from the Boards, the grant applicant will be notified and, if funded, a grant agreement will be prepared.

Grant Agreements: The grant agreement incorporates the application received and all applicable Federal and State laws and regulations. Grant agreements will include all reporting requirements and applicable administrative policies, including those on the branding and promotion of grant-supported activities. Grantees may be required to attend a workshop or participate in a conference call on grant implementation procedures.

Reports: A brief final report will be required, and it will include a short narrative, as well as other documentation, including photographs and web links, as appropriate to demonstrate the impact of funded work. One copy of the final report will be submitted.

Site Visits: All funded projects are subject to site visits and a mid-year check-in call by representatives from the LGBTQ Fund of Mississippi and/or the Community Foundation for Mississippi, including staff, volunteers, or consultants prior to funding, during the time in which project activities are being performed, and/or following the completion of the final report.

Notice of Awards: No public notice of awards by either the grantee or the grant recipient will be made until grant agreements are executed.

Award Credit and Recognition: Grantees should acknowledge support from the LGBTQ Fund of Mississippi at the Community Foundation for Mississippi in all announcements and other literature used to promote grant-supported activities, as well as in all materials developed for publication as part of any grant-supported activities, including print materials, online materials, exhibits, and signs.

Payment of Grants: Grant amounts awarded will be paid as detailed in the final grant agreement, subject to disbursement policies and procedures of the Community Foundation for Mississippi, which administers the fund.

LGBTQ of Mississippi Grant RFP/Proposal Information

Questions concerning these guidelines and the RFP process should be directed to Michael Martella at grants@lgbtqfundms.org. General questions about the LGBTQ Fund of Mississippi should be directed to Sammy Moon at sammy.moon@alliancems.org or 443 562 6363.