



Sample Grant Processes & Resources:

The following is provided as a resource for Philanthropy West Virginia members in identifying grant processes and steps to undertake. We advise each organization using this resource to reference your organization’s own legal, tax, and operational counsel to ensure it is in accordance with your operating guidelines and related laws.

As each grantmaking foundation, corporate giving program, and philanthropists takes a different approach, this is provided to guide the work of other funders noting their individual need to adjust based upon their goals, values, and focus.

Step 1: Foundation/Corporation establishes a grantmaking cycle and decision making process cycle. Which option do you prefer?:

<u>Select Cycle Preference</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Select Specific Dates</u> <i>(examples below)</i>
	Weekly	Every other Monday
	Monthly	1 st Thursday of the Month
	Quarterly	2 nd Monday of Every Quarter
	Annually	Annual Board Meeting

Step 2: Foundation/Corporation sets grant deadline(s): Based upon the Foundation/Corporation’s grantmaking cycle above, it is suggested to give yourself 6 to 8 weeks before your board/committee that reviews the grants will be meeting. For example, if you have quarterly board meetings and your meeting on March 1st them make the grant deadline by January 14th.

Step 3: Grant Application Content: As each foundation is unique, the application can also be unique for each organization. We suggest that you keep the process simple and effective for both applicants and the grant reviewers for decision making. The highlights of what is needed in each grant application is:

- Applicant Organization Name, Contact Information, Chief Executive Officer, and Board Membership
- Applicant’s project or program title, executive summary of the project/program’s purpose (keep it simple), and then two to three additional sections clarifying the project’s intentions such as
 - What need does the project/program address?
 - What is your project plan/timeline?
 - How does this relate to the grantmaking priorities of the foundation/organization?
 - How will this project/program improve the community?
 - What is the overall project/program cost, how much are you asking of the “foundation/corporation”, and who else will you be soliciting to secure 100% of the budget?
 - Confirmation via signature or e-signature of the authorized staff leadership member (CEO, Executive Director, etc.) affirming all information is accurate and correct.
- Attachments:
 - If you did not include it in the application, have the organization include a project budget
 - The applicant organization’s most recent financial review of audited report, and/or

- Form 990 filed with the IRS
- Statement of confirming their updated registration with the WV Secretary of State's Office
- Possibly request samples of program or organization marketing materials or photos of the project/copies of the plans.
- Provide contact information for foundation/corporation in case applicants have questions on who to contact and make sure it is a real person.

Step 4: Grant Processing: Upon receiving the grant applications at your foundation/corporation, prepare to process them either electronically or physical copies.

- Create a master list in your software portal or in MS Word of Excel of the applications listing by: Name of Organization, Contact Person, Title, Grant Purpose, Amount, and marking if they have included all details.
- Review each application to see if they have provided all requested information and attachments.
- Review the provided financial details about the organization to determine if they are using best practices, are in good standing with the IRS and WV Secretary of State's Office, and good budget planning. If they have some questionable areas, consider talking with them to see if they might need assistance in this area and consider grants that help build up internal financial operations.
- Establish a ranking system for each application on an equitable and fair basis with a ranking either per application question or the entire application on a ranking of 1 (lowest consideration) to 5 (highly recommend).
- Once an initial review of received applications is complete, proceed with summarizing the applications for your grants/disbursements committee to review. Make sure that your reviewers for selection note any conflicts of interest in the process to prevent any self-dealing.
- Each committee or board member will rank the applications based upon your ranking systems turning in their rankings, comments, and questions.
- Compile the responses to identify any additional information needed, questions, and which are the top ranked applications.
- If questions or additional information is needed, then contact the applicants to compile that information.
- Have the committee meet after the ranking to share the totals to finalize the awards, amounts, and options in case you have runner ups.

Step 5: Grant Awards: Upon the initial review and ranking process, the grant award recommendations should be presented to the final decision-making board or body. The decision-making body is then presented with the overall report on number of applications, types, and which ones are being put forward for recommendation for funding. Each application is then presented for review and then asks for board/decision-making body approval of the application. Once all funds have been expended, the foundation then proceeds with notifying applicants. The board should approve the finalize slate of selected grantees and amounts to put into your board meeting minutes.

Step 6: Communicating Grant Decisions: With a decision now made, the foundation/corporation should proceed with notifying both the organizations you have awarded funding and those you have not of the decision pertaining to their application. Steps you can take:

- Prepare letter or email to send to the selected grant applicants sharing the "good news" and sharing details of how much was fund, the project, and the focus of the funding. You should outline the steps you will take to send the funds:
 - A. Send the funds outright requesting a final and/or mid-term report at a set deadline including all receipts and/or documentation of expenses, or
 - B. Doing a reimbursable grant asking them to complete the project and submit the receipts afterward as documentation to then send the funds.
- Prepare letter or email to send to the NON-selected grant applicants. This should thank them for their application. POLITELY share that they have not been selected to receive a grant. If you have some articulate and respectful comments on why you didn't select them. Please let them know. you

may share a statement such as: “We have received more applications than expected and funds were available this cycle. We appreciate your work, but were unable to fund your project at this time.”

- Step 7: Grants Management:** Upon sending out the grant awards, your foundation/corporation should provide specifics as to how you want the grant recipient to update you and report back to you. Again, apply the Keep It Simple approach. Here’s a few examples of steps to take:
- Ask the grantee to submit a final report by a set deadline. The final report can be a memo highlighting work undertaken, report on expenses, and include some photos or quotations from those who benefited from the project. Based upon the size of the grant keep the reporting simple. For example,
 - If a \$100 to \$5,000 grant, ask them to provide a one or two-page memo outlining what took place, work accomplished, how funds were used, and share some photos and quotations.
 - If a \$5,000 to \$25,000 grant, consider having a few in-depth questions about what took place, results, impact, and stories of the changes/service made.
 - If \$25,000 plus, your foundation/corporation might want to expand the report a bit based upon your board/committee’s request.
 - Schedule a visit to see the organization’s work and thank them for their work in the community
 - Invite the organization to present at a future meeting of your board or grants committee to share the progress made.

- Step 8: Assess & Adapt:** After completing a grant cycle, be sure to summarize the reports provided by the grant recipients to share with your committees and board. Be open to asking for feedback from your grantees on how to make the process smoother and more efficient. In this digital age, several online systems can streamline processes and reduce paper/work on behalf of the foundation/corporation as well as the grantee application. Be open to always making sure your grant process is not preventing organization’s from applying and your engaging diverse communities. Please use the summarized reports from your grantees to adapt your processes and report out how your grants are impacting the community. You can promote both your grantee’s great work and your foundation’s investments.

This is a sample of a general grant process cycle of the eight steps your foundation/organization can undertake. Philanthropy WV has additional resources, trainings, and expertise to help if you need more specific details. Contact our office 304.517.1450 with any questions.