GRANT GUIDELINES

Madison Cooper created the Cooper Foundation with a mission to make Waco, Texas a better or more desirable city in which to live. This is realized through grant awards to qualifying nonprofits in Waco, Texas. We are proud to fund projects that impact all aspects of life in Waco – education, health, arts and culture, and community building and social services.

Please note that we only fund programs in Waco, Texas and only accept proposals from organizations that have programming and staff in Waco. If a nonprofit organization would like to begin working in Waco, we recommend that they identify a local nonprofit partner.

TYPES OF GRANTS

Cooper Foundation funds the following types of grants:

- Project Support Grant – Funds a particular program or project.
- Capital Project Grant – Funds the purchase or construction of a building, land, or major equipment.
- Capacity Building Grant – Funds core organizational skills and capabilities, such as leadership, fundraising, and management.
- Challenge/Matching Grant – Provides funds with the condition (or with the expectation) that additional funds be raised from other sources.
- Innovation Grant – Funds projects that experiment with new solutions to social problems.

GRANT RESTRICTIONS

Types of organizations – Cooper Foundation only makes grants to 501(c)(3) public charities with a 509(a)(1) or (2) designation or to governmental agencies. We do not make grants to churches or to fund activities that teach, promote, or deny any particular religion.

- Funding uses – Cooper Foundation does not fund individuals, scholarship programs, fundraising drives, or churches. We also do not sponsor events. We very rarely fund seed grants.
- Repeat grantees – With limited funds to award, we ask organizations to only apply one time within a 12-month period.

GRANT SIZES

We make grants of all sizes! Grant awards vary based on project need, organizational capacity, familiarity, and budget. Recent grants have ranged from $600 to $750,000. Request only the amount needed; grants are typically fully funded or declined.

HOW TO APPLY

Organizations are strongly encouraged to discuss potential requests with Foundation staff before applying. We know how precious time and resources are to nonprofit organizations, and we want to ensure that your time developing a proposal is well-spent. In other words – we don't want to waste anyone's time.

OUR PROCESS

1. **Readiness Check**: Please review the Organizational Readiness Checklist to determine if your organization is ready for foundation funding.

2. **Grant Inquiry**: Either submit a GRANT INQUIRY form OR call/meet with foundation staff to discuss your potential proposal.

   There are no deadlines for grant inquiries. They are accepted on an ongoing basis. Once submitted, Cooper Foundation staff will review your inquiry and be in touch within a few weeks to let you know if you are invited to submit a full proposal. If you are on a tight timeline for a project, please be sure to state that online in the inquiry or email us to let us know.

3. **Proposal**: If your inquiry is accepted, you will be invited to submit a full grant proposal through the online system by invitation from Cooper Foundation staff. Grant submission due dates can be found on our website. The questions in our online Proposal are included in the pages that follow these guidelines. Please do not submit a proposal via email. Contact us if you need access to the portal!

4. **Review:** Once your proposal has been submitted, our staff will review the submitted documents to ensure we have everything we need and we will begin our due diligence process (details below). We may reach back out to you to ask for additional information, or if we received the wrong document from you. Once we have everything we need from you, we will share your proposal with the Cooper Board of Directors, who make the final decision regarding funding.

   During our due diligence process, we are looking for strong, sustainable organizations that have a solid plan for the project for which they are seeking funding. The strongest organizations and their proposals will include the following:

   PROGRAM DESIGN:
   - The organization has effectively identified the issue and population to be served in an understandable way and is able to demonstrate need with verifiable facts, statistics, and data.
   - The project demonstrates the incorporation of its sector's research and best practices.
   - The organization clearly articulates what they plan to do and the proposed project has the ability to meet identified needs. Project objectives, methods, and evaluation are clearly defined and describe a sequence/flow and interaction of activities that will be used for measuring impact.
   - The project proactively works to reduce a duplication or overlap of services. Networks have been formed and the organization is engaged in consistent dialogue with other service providers. Organizational efforts promote problem solving that supports partnership and collaboration.

   ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY:
   - Collectively, board members are actively engaged, as demonstrated by attendance, financial contributions, and commitment. The board is strategically engaged in monitoring and planning for future needs and challenges.
   - The organization has a solid, diversified fundraising plan in place and is working increasingly towards its self-sufficiency. The board is fully engaged in fundraising efforts.

- The organization is able to demonstrate a healthy fiscal position, the budget is equally balanced with regard to revenue and expenses, and the organization has funds to cover three months of expenses. The auditor's management letter is clean.

TECHNICAL COMPLIANCE:

- Documentation was received on time and was complete. The submission follows our guidelines and the narrative clearly and comprehensively addresses proposal questions.

The review process typically takes 3-4 months from when we first receive your full proposal (not from when we receive your inquiry).

Please note that an invitation to apply indicates interest only and does not guarantee funding.

Questions?

please contact:

Felicia Goodman
Executive Director
felicia@cooperfdn.org
254-754-0315

PROPOSAL QUESTIONS

Cooper Foundation only accepts proposals through our online portal. The following pages provide an outline of the questions included in our online proposal so that you can have an idea of what we ask. Please do not submit a proposal via email.
Contact us if you need access to the portal!

Organization Information

Year Organization was Established

Your Organization's Website

Organization's Mission & Vision Statements

Provide a brief description of the organization and the work you do in Waco

Similar Organizations

To the best of your knowledge, identify any other entities in Waco or McLennan County that pursue similar objectives or provide comparable services and explain how your project differs from or complements their efforts.

Project Description

Project Name

Amount of Request

What is the total budget for the project?

Amount of Request as Percent of Full Project Budget

Amount of Request as Percent of Organization's Annual Budget (current year)

What are the anticipated start and end dates of your project?

This helps us understand the best timing for a grant and if your project timeline aligns with our grant making timeline.

Brief description of the project.
WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR: If someone were to only read this description, they'd have a general idea of what you are asking Cooper to fund

Tell us more about your project. What would you like to do with a Cooper Foundation grant?

Please tell us why this project is needed in our community. What strategies will you use to implement the project?

Project Impact

What is the expected impact of your project, will the expected impact be measured, and how will you know you were successful?

Organizational Capacity

Please describe your organization's experience in similar activities or other indicators of your organization's capacity to implement the proposed strategies?

Community Partners

What other organizations or entities need to be involved in the proposed project to ensure its success and how will you engage them to collaborate?
(Provide support letters only if applicable in Attachments section of proposal.)

Who are other possible financial supporters of this project? Project Sustainability

If this grant is awarded, how will you continue the project or maintain the investment after the funding ends?

Board Oversight

Board Attendance Chart (past 12 months)

Board Members

Provide a list of your board members with one sentence or phrase about each one describing what strengths, knowledge, expertise, and diversity they bring to your board. Indicate those that serve as board officers. Finally, describe any board governance training your board members receive.

Board Financial Oversight

- Does your board of directors have a dedicated Finance Committee?
- If so, who serves on that committee?
- How often does that committee meet?
- What materials/documents do they review?
- Who on your board leads the financial oversight of the organization? What is their expertise?
- What financial documents does the full board of directors review at each meeting?

Financials & Attachments

Organization's Funding Model

Please tell us what percentage of your funding comes from each of the following sources: Government grants, private grants, individual donors, earned income, and other sources.

Funders

Please list all institutional funders of your organization for the past 12 months (e.g. foundations, government grants, corporations). Please do not list individual donors.

Project Budget

Please upload a line-item budget for this project. Include the following in the budget:

- Clearly list ALL anticipated revenue/income for this project, noting: whether or not each has been secured
- Clearly list all expenses for this project, indicating:
    - which specific line items of your project budget you are seeking from Cooper Foundation,
    - if Cooper funds would fully fund the project, and
    - if the funds you are requesting will be used to match or to leverage other sources of revenue.

We will also ask you to upload the following documents:

- Current Year's Operating Budget
- Statement of Financial Position/AKA Balance Sheet - CURRENT fiscal year (assets & liabilities)
- Statement of Financial Position/AKA Balance Sheet – TWO PREVIOUS fiscal years (assets & liabilities)
- Statement of Activities CURRENT year to date (income/revenue & expenses)
- Statement of Activities TWO PREVIOUS fiscal years (income/revenue & expenses)
- Budget Comparison - Previous Fiscal Year (Proposed v. Actual)
- Audited Financial Statements (most recent)
- Letter on Internal Controls (audit)
- Organizational Chart
- 990 (most recent)

Additional Information (optional)

Letters of Support

If appropriate, submit letters of support from organizations with which you will collaborate closely on the implementation of this project. Please do not submit letters from organizations or entities that simply support the work that you do.

Additional Information: Optional

Is there anything you would like us to know that we have not asked about yet? Please note, this is not required!

Additional Documents: Optional

If you would like to add additional documents to your proposal that are relevant to your request, please upload them here. Please note, this is not required!

COOPER
FOUNDATION