



ABOUT OUR GRANT PROCESS

In an effort to streamline the Foundation's grantmaking efforts while allowing the very best proposals to get the attention they deserve, we have modified the grants process for 2020. Previous applicants will find the process similar to past years, but with these changes: 1) The Letter of Inquiry (LOI) is more concise, with fewer questions; and 2) Acceptable LOI's will be invited to an LOI Interview, with the strongest then moving on to the Grant Application stage.

1. **Letter of Inquiry.** As in the past, the first step in applying for a grant is to submit a **Letter of Inquiry (LOI)** via the Foundation's online grant portal. We have streamlined the Letter of Inquiry for our 2020 grants by reducing the number of questions.
2. **LOI Interview.** The Foundation will review LOI's, inviting the most promising for an **LOI Interview**. Prior to the interview, the applicant will receive a list of discussion questions that will be used to guide the interview. LOI Interviews will assist the Foundation in determining which applicants will be invited to submit **Grant Applications**.
3. **Grant Application.** The Grant Application is a thorough elaboration on the LOI, and will require the applicant to be more specific as to measurable results, program design and budget. Emphasis of the application is on outcomes and impact.
4. **Grant Application Interview.** Following submission of an acceptable Grant Application, the applicant will be invited to a Grant Interview, meeting with members of the Foundation's Distribution Committee and staff to explore the potential impact of the grant.
5. **Grant Decision.** Approximately a week after the Grant Application Interview, the Foundation's Distribution Committee will meet to make its grant decisions. Foundation staff will communicate the decisions promptly; usually within three days.
6. **Grant Agreement.** The grantee will meet with Foundation staff to review the specifics of the grant, including timeframe for implementation, grant payment schedule, and a Grant Agreement. The Grant Agreement sets forth the understandings of the Foundation and the grantee, capturing the intended impact and results of the grant.

2020-21 Grant Opportunity Schedules

Here is a list of our grant opportunities, and the schedule for each:

Open Grants Schedule:

Process Step	Round 1 - 2020	Round 2 - 2020
<i>Opportunity Release Date</i>	<i>March 4th</i>	<i>July 1st</i>
<i>Letter of Inquiry Due</i>	<i>April 15th</i>	<i>October 2nd</i>
<i>LOI Interviews</i>	<i>April 20-24th</i>	<i>October 12-16th</i>
<i>Application Due</i>	<i>May 27th</i>	<i>November 11th</i>
<i>Grant Interviews</i>	<i>June 16-18th</i>	<i>December 8-10th</i>
<i>Grant Announcements</i>	<i>June 26th</i>	<i>December 18th</i>

Neighborhood Revitalization Grants Schedule

Process Step	Round 1 - 2020	Round 2 - 2021
<i>Opportunity Release Date</i>	<i>April 10th</i>	<i>February 2021</i>
<i>Letter of Inquiry Due</i>	<i>June 26th</i>	<i>April 2021</i>
<i>LOI Interviews</i>	<i>July 20th – 24th</i>	<i>May 2021</i>
<i>Application Due</i>	<i>August 28th</i>	<i>June 2021</i>
<i>Grant Interviews</i>	<i>September 22 - 24</i>	<i>June 2021</i>
<i>Grant Announcements</i>	<i>October 2nd</i>	<i>July 2021</i>

Food Security Grants Schedule

Process Step	Round 1 - 2020	Round 2 - 2021
<i>Opportunity Release Date</i>	<i>April 10th</i>	<i>February 2021</i>
<i>Letter of Inquiry Due</i>	<i>June 26th</i>	<i>April 2021</i>
<i>LOI Interviews</i>	<i>July 20th – 24th</i>	<i>May 2021</i>
<i>Application Due</i>	<i>August 28th</i>	<i>June 2021</i>
<i>Grant Interviews</i>	<i>September 22 – 24th</i>	<i>June 2021</i>
<i>Grant Announcements</i>	<i>October 2nd</i>	<i>July 2021</i>

Building Capacity Grants Schedule

Process Step	Round 1 - 2020	Round 2 - 2021
<i>Opportunity Release Date</i>	<i>By invitation</i>	<i>By invitation</i>
<i>Application Due</i>	<i>October 2020*</i>	<i>October 2021*</i>
<i>Grant Interviews</i>	<i>November 2020*</i>	<i>November 2021*</i>
<i>Grant Announcements</i>	<i>December 2020*</i>	<i>December 2021*</i>

*Schedules are subject to change pending progress of the overall grant program. Specific 2021 dates to be announced at a later date.

MICRO-GRANTS

The Foundation's Micro Grants program is an abbreviated process for consideration of requests of \$10,000 or less. Organizations might consider applying for a Micro Grant for planning, research, evaluation and development of future projects, or to get pilot projects off the ground in anticipation of being able to bring the program to scale in the future.

The maximum Micro Grant award is \$10,000, however, the average Micro Grant awards fall into the \$3,000-\$6,000 range.

If you are interested in submitting a Micro Grant application, you must first contact the Foundation to discuss your project ideas. Once approved by the Foundation's Executive Director, you will receive the code needed to access the Micro Grant application form. Micro Grant application decisions are usually reached within 30 days of submission.

OUTCOMES MATTER

It is a core value and responsibility of the Foundation to be a good steward of the funds gifted to us by donors. Given that there are hundreds of non-profit entities within Schenectady County – most of them in need of philanthropic support – the Foundation must be highly selective in its funding decisions. Most years, funding requests far exceed our available financial resources. We prioritize those grant requests most likely to have a significant impact in our areas of strategic focus.

We recognize that “theory of change”, “logic models” and “measurable outcomes” may not be in your everyday vocabulary, though, so it might be difficult to articulate the results of your proposed project in a written narrative. For this reason, we have taken the more detailed outcome-related questions out of the LOI and application forms, and will discuss them with you when you come for your LOI Interview. Measurable outcomes do still matter to us, very much, and we will help to guide the conversation if you are unsure of how to share that information with us. For most applicants – particularly program proposals – a Theory of Change will be required at the Grant Application stage.

APPLY FOR A GRANT

Getting Started with Your Application

Please [click here](#) to access The Schenectady Foundation's online grants portal. If you are a new applicant, you will first need to establish an account. If you have previously applied for funding through our grants portal, you may log on with your email address and password. For assistance with your online grant application, you may contact our office at (518) 393-9500.

Submitting Letters of Inquiry

Letters of Inquiry (LOI) may be submitted through the Foundation's grants portal at any time. The Foundation strives to respond to completed LOIs within 14 days of submission. After the

review period, successful applicants will be asked to meet with the Foundation staff to discuss proposed outcomes and impacts, among other project details.

LOIs that are accepted will be moved immediately to the grant stage.

Submitting Grant Applications

If you are interested in applying for a grant, then once approved through the LOI and pre-application interview processes, you will be granted access to the full application form. Grant applications must be submitted through the Foundation’s grants portal. Those submitted by the pre-determined due dates - and that meet all requirements for completeness and substance - will be forwarded to the Foundation’s Distribution Committee for consideration, approximately 4 weeks after submission due dates. The Foundation’s practice is to meet with each applicant, along with Distribution Committee members, to ensure that all decision-makers understand the proposed project, and have the opportunity to fully explore the potential of the project with the applicant.

One-Time vs. Multi-year Grants

In general, the Foundation aims to serve as a catalyst for change, whereby its one-time financial support is used to assist an organization to secure plans for program/project sustainability. There are exceptions, however, where the Foundation may consider a multi-year commitment (up to three years) to ensure the project becomes sustainable, or is brought to scale. Typically, these will be programs with an established track record.

Continuance Grants

Current or recent grantees that have met or exceeded expectations for their past grant performance may be invited by the Foundation to apply for a **Continuance Grant** in order to extend the project for one or more additional years. In such cases, the applicant will not be required to submit an LOI, but will be invited to discuss the next application with Foundation staff prior to submitting a Continuance Grant Application.

If you have any questions regarding the process, please contact Kristi Miller by email at kmiller@schenectadyfoundation.org or by phone at (518) 393-9500.

SUMMARY OF 2020 GRANT OPPORTUNITIES AND KEY DATES

Grant Opportunity	Release Date	LOI due date	Grant due date
Open Grants – Round One	March 4 th	April 15 th	May 27 th
Open Grants – Round Two	July 1 st	October 2 nd	November 11 th
Food Security	April 10 th	June 26 th	August 28 th
Neighborhood Revitalization Grants	April 10 th	June 26 th	August 28 th
Building Capacity	<i>By invitation</i>		
Thriving Neighborhoods	October 5 th	NA	December 5 th