Community Foundation
of TOMPKINS COUNTY

MISSION, VISION, & VALUES

We bring people and resources together to build a more equitable Tompkins County by inspiring diverse philanthropy, catalyzing collaborations, and championing inclusion and justice. Our values are community, Engagement, Integrity, Racial Equity, Relationships, and Social Justice.

"All 501(c)(3) organizations serving Tompkins County are welcome to apply. This grant cycle supports organizations whose mission is important to building resiliency in our communities".

Grant Range: $500 - $12,000

Application Due Date: May 14, 2025, 5:00pm

Funding Notifications: Mid-June

Final Report Due: March 31, 2026

This grant cycle aims to provide flexible, **unrestricted** support to community organizations that contribute to the resilience of our many and diverse Tompkins County communities. We make community grants to initiatives that enable Tompkins County to thrive.

Our Grant-Making Philosophy

Our mission, vision, and values guide our grant-making. Our Community Foundation makes grants that address community needs and bring about positive change. **We strive to**:

• Encourage learning, reflection, and shared growth.

• Be transparent, accessible, and accountable in our grantmaking practices.

• Support projects rooted in lived experience and community collaboration.

• Reduce barriers to funding for grassroots and emerging initiatives.

• Commit to active and ongoing collaborative relationships with applicants.

• Engage diverse groups of community members to take part in the decision-making process for funding decisions.

OUR GRANTS COME FROM:

- Tompkins Today & Tomorrow Fund, unrestricted discretionary grant funding.
- Field-of-interest funds reflect the specific topic for which the fund was created. They may also reflect the guidance of field of interest fund community volunteers and our Community Engagement Committee.
- Donor-advised funds reflect the charitable goals of individual donor advisors and represent donor advisor-initiated grants and their responses to grant cycle applications.

OUR PROMISE TO YOU:

- Honor your time and your effort in applying.
- Treat you with respect and care throughout the process.
- Provide clear and timely communication.
- Offer feedback, whether or not you receive funding.
- Uplift your work, not just through funding but by listening, connecting, and celebrating your impact.

As a foundation, we are moving away from project-based funding and towards granting unrestricted dollars to help support mission-driven goals and objectives. We have joined dozens of community foundations to adopt the best practice of [Trust-Based Philanthropy](). Trust-based philanthropy alleviates power imbalances between funders and grantees while fostering more productive and informative relationships. **Driven by the central philosophy that funders should approach grantee relationships as learning partnerships, a trust-based approach encourages unrestricted funding, streamlined reporting, and transparent and responsive communication**.

We promise to conduct a fair, equitable, transparent grant review process. Implicit bias is inherent in grantmaking, and we are intentional in trying to mitigate its influence. Implicit bias can unintentionally affect who gets funded, potentially leading to unfair or unequal outcomes; it starts with our review team members. We have included implicit bias training in our review team orientation process so reviewers are self-aware of their own biases.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

While we cannot provide funding to all organizations in this grant cycle, we do play a matchmaking role between organizations' needs and the resources of donors, funds, funders, our board, and best practices in the field. The Community Foundation holds many funds, reflecting a wide variety of interests. Some are specialized, and some are more general. Because we seek to match needs with donors, we will share a summary of your application with the advisors of our many donor-advised funds (over 150).

In addition to our less restrictive funds, we look for alignment between your work and special issue funds such as Aging, Animal Welfare, Arts and culture, Birth to 3, Children and youth, Community Planning and design, Food Security, and Men and Women.

[The Impacts of the Recent Executive Orders on Nonprofits]()

GRANTMAKING GUIDELINES:

- Applications must be completed and submitted online by **May 14 at 5 pm**. **Late applications will not be accepted**. The link to the application can be found at www.cftompkins.org.
- If you received a grant in 2024, you were required to submit a grant report on **January 31st, 2025**. This will affect your eligibility to apply for the grant cycle. **You will need to upload your latest grant report to apply for this cycle**.
- Grantees must be a not-for-profit [501(c)(3)] organization, government (e.g., public schools, municipality, school district), or faith-based organization (to support non-religious activities directed toward a public purpose).
- Organizations must provide services to residents of Tompkins County.

Take note
- The grant award must be used within 12 months of receiving the grant.
- **Applicants may only receive up to $12,000.**
- Previous funding does not guarantee continued funding.
- Applications meeting the requirements will be evaluated by a review team with final approval by the Community Foundation Board of Directors.
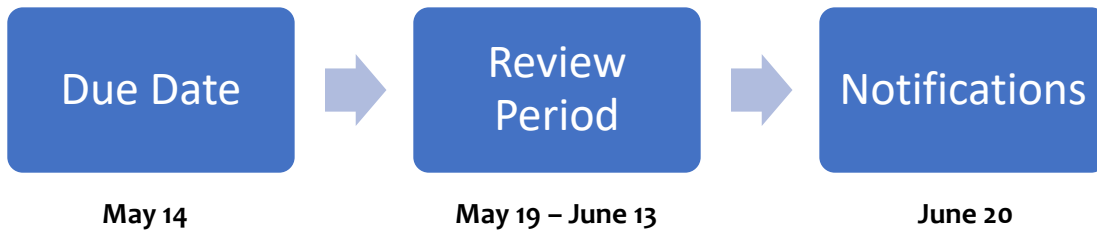
APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- Access the application at https://bit.ly/CFTCGrantApp.
- **All Users (first time only)**: Please click on "Create New Account" to complete the registration process and create your login credentials. Follow the instructions on the page. Tutorials available.
- If you are neurodivergent and/or need help completing this application, or if English is not your native language and would like to request a translated version of this application, please email Gloria Coicou at gcoicou@cftompkins.org or call 607-272-9333.
- Contact Madeline Rosas, Administrative Manager, with any technical questions related to your application, admin@cftompkins.org.

REVIEW TEAMS WILL FOCUS ON THE FOLLOWING:

- Application is complete, and all "Grantmaking Guidelines" are met.
- Clarity of vision and community impact.
- Goals are effectively set and SMART goals.
- Effective communication and engagement with those served.
- Adaptability of services to meet community needs.
- Clear evidence of collaboration, active sharing, and planning across organizations in service to improve outcomes overall.
- Contribution to racial equity in services and outcomes.

We are not looking for perfection. We are looking for heart, purpose, and possibility.

TIMELINE:

Due Date → Review Period → Notifications

May 14   May 19 – June 13   June 20

We acknowledge, honor, and appreciate the work you do every day. We see you; we feel you, and we are here to support you in any way we can. Please know that your work is part of the fabric and the breath of our community.

~The Community Foundation of Tompkins County

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If I applied and was funded in a previous cycle, am I eligible to apply in this cycle?
Absolutely, yes! We encourage organizations to apply for every grant cycle.

Can I apply for general operating support?
Yes. We know how important flexible funding is.

What if I've never written a grant before?
That's okay! We welcome first-time applicants and offer support throughout the process.

If my program is part of a parent organization that houses several programs, can I apply separately, or does our parent organization have to apply for us?
Because of the intense process involved with grantmaking, organizations are **limited to two applications up to $12,000 total**. It does not matter how programs split the $12,000.

I have a fiscal sponsor who sponsors many programs. Will that affect my application?
No, your application will not be affected by this. We know who our fiscal sponsors are and take the necessary steps to move applications along.

Where will the Q & A recording be located for future reference?
https://www.cftompkins.org/granting/grant-opportunities/.

How much can I apply for if I'm a first-time applicant?
$500-$12,000.

Do I have to submit last year's grant cycle report before applying for this grant cycle?

Yes, you must submit a report on your prior year's award to apply.

Is a grant report what you did with the last grant award?
Yes, if you applied for a grant last year and were funded, you received an email providing information on how to access your grant report form, when it is due, where to find additional info, etc.

Is there an average grant size per cycle or organization?
No, every organization's needs are different. Organizational needs are assessed along with many other factors involved in the grant review process. The maximum award is $12,000.

Do you have any general advice for those who are new to applying?
- Ask questions, use resources available, use your team, use employees, and collaborate with others to get your applications in.
- Have someone who does not know your work to review your application.
- Talk about your impact, results, and outcomes. How do you know you've achieved your mission? It does not have to be perfect!

What applications are most likely to be funded and why?
There is no good answer to this. Funding recommendations are not about an issue or topic; they are about your application's quality, merit, and content. We want to see that your organization is working on its mission in a collaborative way that advances social justice in our community to improve outcomes. It's more about the process and the methodology.

The Community Foundation has offered a multi-year programmatic funding opportunity in previous fall cycles. Is this something that the CFTC intends to offer in a future cycle in addition to this unrestricted support?
We have done this before but do not yet know if we will do this again. It is not part of this cycle.

If an organization received an award from a donor-advised fund managed by the Community Foundation, is that considered a Community Foundation grant?
Yes, if the Community Foundation manages the fund, it is considered a Community Foundation grant but is not part of your grant cycle award.

If an organization serves multiple counties across the state, is that considered when making a funding decision?
If you provide some benefit to those who live in, work in, or go to school in Tompkins County, we invite you to apply. Please be specific and provide as much detail as possible.

Who do I contact for content-related questions?
Gloria Coicou, gcoicou@cftompkins.org

Who do I contact for technical questions?
Madeline Rosas, admin@cftompkins.org