

About The HOPE Fund

The HOPE Fund is a permanent community endowment, established at the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan in 1994. The HOPE Fund provides grants and technical assistance to nonprofit organizations serving the local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities. The fund continues to grow as a result of the generous contributions of many individuals and businesses throughout southeast Michigan.

The HOPE Fund Grant Priorities

In an effort to be more flexible and impactful, the leadership of The HOPE Fund has decided to give priority to grantmaking focused on efforts to strengthen the capacity of organizations and the local LGBT sector as a whole, rather than seeking to solely support specific program development.

As such, nonprofit organizations may apply to The HOPE Fund for grants to support efforts that will accomplish one or more of the following goals:

- Support for capacity building for LGBT agencies which leads to increased efficiency internally.
- Support for efforts for two or more agencies which serve the LGBT community to collaborate in meaningful ways that lead to more efficiency and impact in the community.
- Support for efforts that eliminate duplication of services by the nonprofit community.
- Support for efforts that increase the effectiveness, voice and visibility of the LGBT community in the state of Michigan.

Examples of projects that may address these priorities could include (but are not exclusive to) board development efforts, strategic planning, financial training, joint fundraising endeavors, coordinated programming between multiple nonprofit organizations, and costs of collaboration or merger processes of multiple nonprofit organizations.

Grants are competitive and there is no guarantee of being funded from one year to the next. It is strongly recommended that new grant proposals not be filed until final reports on any past grants have been submitted. The one exception to this is the submission of collaborative proposals; if an agency agrees to be the fiduciary for a collaborative effort between multiple organizations, the submission of that collaborative proposal does not exclude the agency from submitting a second proposal focused on the growth of their own internal capacity.

The HOPE Fund will consider applications from either LGBT-specific nonprofit agencies or nonprofit agencies that have a broader mission but are meaningfully serving the LGBT community in some way. Regardless of the applicant, the same priority goals for the HOPE Fund will be sought in a proposal. Ultimately, The HOPE Fund is seeking for the community to best serve the needs of LGBT people and their families.

Generally, grants range from \$5,000-\$25,000. In exceptional circumstances, larger grants will be considered.

Who May Apply

The Foundation will make grants to 501(c)(3) organizations, government entities, school districts and universities. While grants to religious organizations are considered, sectarian religious programs are not eligible. We also do not make grants to individuals or to cover deficits or other previously incurred obligations.

Proposal Format

The HOPE Fund does not require a specific proposal format. However, the Grant Application Checklist found [here](#) outlines the items you should include in a proposal. Once you have assembled those items identified in the checklist, please submit them to the foundation electronically on the link found at cfsem.org/apply.

Most importantly, the proposal narrative should provide the rationale for the proposed project, why the project is important, and how the project will be sustained in the long-run.

Deadlines

The HOPE Fund has two grant cycles each year. If the proposal is submitted prior to **February 15**, a response will be received in June. If the proposal is submitted prior to **August 15**, a response will be received in December.

Grant Decisions

Numerous factors are taken into account when considering the many requests we receive; the quality of the proposed program, its potential impact and its sustainability are among them. The questions below provide additional valuable insight into the grant decision process. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list, nor is it intended to be prescriptive. Nonetheless, these questions may serve as guidance for developing a strong proposal.

Quality

- Does the project reflect best practices?
- Is it consistent with the latest knowledge of what works?
- Is the project well-conceived and clearly described?
- Is the project feasible?

Scope

- Does the project promote regional or community vitality?
- Will the proposed activities reach a broad segment of the southeast Michigan community?
- Is the project replicable?
- Does the project promote collaboration across the region?

Impact

- Does the proposed project address a critical unmet need?
- Does the project have a high probability of leading to new solutions to community challenges?
- Does the project have the potential for long-term community impact?
- Is the project proactively addressing some of the diversity, inclusion and equity challenges that face our region?

Sustainability

- Will the proposed project leverage additional funds from a variety of sources?
- Is the project of interest to and supported by other funders?
- Is the applicant investing some of its own money into the project?

Organizational Capacity

- Does the project enhance the quality of the applicant organization?
- Does the applicant organization have the capacity to successfully complete the project?
- Does the project provide an opportunity for learning by other nonprofit organizations?
- Is the applicant reaching out for expertise in areas where the organization does not have needed expertise on staff?

Reporting Requirements

If a grant is awarded, the grantee organization will be required to submit a report at the end of the grant period to share the results of the project and to show that all funds were spent as intended. If the grant period is more than 12 months, interim reports may be required before grant payment installments are made.

Thank you for considering submitting a proposal to The HOPE Fund. We value our community partners and grantees, and we want to work with you to improve the quality of life in our region.