Strengthening Organizations Grant Guidelines

Deadline for Applications: September 28th, 2021

Request Amount: Up to $10,000

Access the Online Application [Here](#)

The Alaska Community Foundation (ACF) offers the Strengthening Organizations grant program with the goal of helping Alaska nonprofits become better equipped to meet their missions. This program supports projects that strengthen the applicant organization, ensuring it has well-organized systems in place and skilled employees who have the training and resources to successfully provide services.

OVERVIEW

➢ To best position your application for success, applicants are <u>strongly encouraged</u> to speak with ACF staff ahead of time to discuss their project and to submit a draft proposal for review by ACF staff. **Draft reviews are available.** Please contact ACF program staff via email: grants@alaskacf.org or by phone: 907-334-6700 for a draft review.

➢ **Grant requests may be for up to $10,000**; typically, awards are funded in the $4,000 to $6,000 range.

➢ All awarded projects are required to be completed within one calendar year from the date grant funds are received. Prior Strengthening Organizations grant award recipients may apply for additional capacity building support once all grant reporting requirements have been completed on the previous grant award.

➢ All applications must be submitted online. Contact ACF with any questions regarding the online application system via email: grants@alaskacf.org or by phone: 907-334-6700. More information and links to the online application system are available at [www.alaskacf.org.](http://www.alaskacf.org)

➢ **Applications will be accepted up to four times per year, with reviews of submitted applications occurring once a quarter.** Please visit the [Alaska Community Foundation website](#) for the most update date information.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA & PRIORITIES

Eligible applicants include 501(c)(3) nonprofit or equivalent organizations located in the state of Alaska. Equivalent organizations may include tribes, churches, or local government agencies and programs.

Ineligible applicants include individuals; for profit, 501(c)(4) or (c)(6) organizations; non-Alaska based organizations; and state or federal government agencies.

Eligible projects: Applicants may select **only one capacity building activity to be accomplished at a time** with Strengthening Organizations grant funding, from the following categories:

1. Board training and/or board related consultants
2. Staff/volunteer training and leadership development
3. Financial management (e.g., accounting software or consultation)
4. Strategic or business planning (e.g., strategic planning, program evaluation, communications or business plans, policy creation, etc.)
5. Community building (e.g., events/conferences to build professional networks, community needs assessment)
6. Technology infrastructure (non-capital costs, e.g., donor tracking systems, website upgrades, etc.)
7. Executive director recruitment or coaching
8. Fundraising plans (e.g., creating and implementing a fundraising or donor development plan)

Ineligible projects include

- Religious indoctrination or other religious activities
- endowment building
- deficit financing
- lobbying
- electioneering and activities of political nature
- proposals for ads
- sponsorships for special events
- direct fundraising, including hiring a grant writer
- reimbursement of pre-award costs
- construction or the purchase of real property

- pass-through funding or other financial assistance to nonprofits
- activities that have the potential to support terrorism
- core government or organizational services
- any proposals that discriminate as to race, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, creed or ethnicity
- direct program costs including personnel costs.

Examples of ineligible expenses include but are not limited to: operating expenses (staff time), technology (laptops), and memberships/subscriptions and fees.

Exceptions: In selected cases, projects undertaken by organizations that normally fall outside the above guidelines may be able to receive funding. Examples include: religious organizations whose proposal impacts the broader community; or units of government whose proposal extends beyond the traditional governmental functions and impacts the broader community.

Priorities: Due to limited budgeted funds for each grant program year, preference will be given to small, rural organizations or projects that result in stronger outreach or programming to rural communities; demonstrate accountability, cultural sensitivity, and unify communities; are politically neutral and environmentally sound; empower the disadvantaged or underserved; are collaborative and show community support.

Applications that include research into the real and estimated costs of the proposed project will be more competitive. *Applicants are highly encouraged to include in their grant proposal estimates and bids for contracted services and/or significant purchases for the project.*

HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION

Step 1: To apply, create a new account in ACF's **online grants system**. Applicants using the web-based system for the first time will need to create a profile. The profile should be completed by the person writing the grant application and responsible for any grant reports. Please remember your username and password as it will be used for all current and future applications and any reporting on awarded grant projects. Visit the **"Helpful Hints"** section for more in-depth information about using the online application system.

Step 2: After logging into the system, you will be routed to the Application Status Page. To start a new application, click "Apply" below your contact information. Select the Strengthening Organizations grant program from the list, and you will be taken to the application. The online system times-out after 40 minutes of no activity; **remember to save your application often.**

Step 3: When logging back on to the system after establishing a Profile, you will be directed to the Application Status Page where you can check your status, find report deadlines and manage your contacts. Contact grants@alaskacf.org if you have trouble with the online grants system.

If you have any questions please contact ACF's VP of Programs & Grants, Eleanor Huffines, at ehuffines@alaskacf.org or Senior Program Officer of Grants & Scholarships, Stefanie O'Brien, at sobrien@alaskacf.org.

Strengthening Organizations Grant Program

Allowable Capacity Building Activities

This list provides examples of activities under specific categories of capacity building that have been approved for funding through this program. ***Proposals must include funding requests for only one activity at a time.*** Please contact ACF Staff with your ideas.

- **Board Training**
Examples include board trainings or consultation with experts in the field of board engagement.

- **Staff/Volunteer Training & Leadership Development**
Planning for staffing or volunteers or leadership training.

- **Financial Management**
An example of financial management might include purchase and installation of accounting software to improve the financial record keeping of your organization.

- **Strategic or Business Planning**
Organizations could engage in strategic planning with a professional consultant to develop a strategic, communication, human resource or business plan.

- **Community Planning**
Examples include attending an event or conference where professional networks can be developed to encourage collaboration with other nonprofits or assessing needs in a community which your organization can serve.

- **Technology Infrastructure**
One-time costs for installation of a new donor tracking system or an update to your website that is capacity building in nature would be eligible. *Annual memberships or subscription fees are not eligible costs.*

- **Executive Director Recruitment or Coaching**
Hiring an executive coach to train for stronger organizational leadership is an example of an eligible project.

- **Fundraising Plans**
Eligible expenses include creating and implementing a fundraising or donor development plan.