

FALL 2019 GENERAL FUND GRANT APPLICATION GUIDE

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General Fund Grants | Process Overview & Important Information

Eligibility Requirements

MRG will consider applications from organizations or groups that:

- * Are based in Oregon and/or whose work benefits those who call Oregon home.
- * Have an organizational (operating) budget of under \$500,000.
 - * In rare occasions, we will consider applications from a larger organization *if* they're submitting a project support grant application for radical and innovative work that is difficult to obtain funding for.
- * Are a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization or have a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor.
 - * If a group has neither federal tax exemption nor a fiscal sponsor, its work must be considered "charitable" or meet tax-exempt criteria per the IRS, i.e. it must be for the benefit of the larger community, not individuals or businesses.
- * Will not have active MRG General Fund grants by the time this grant starts. In other words, if you have a current MRG grant, it must end before December 2019 for you to be eligible to apply for Fall funding.

What we don't fund

- * Individuals
- * Direct services
- * Social service agencies without a clear community organizing focus
- * Unions or direct labor organizing
- * Cooperatives, health clinics, schools
- * Lobbying
- * Previously funded groups that have overdue grant reports
- * Capital campaigns
- * Projects that have already happened or will be completed before funding would begin
- * Work defined by the IRS as being non tax exempt, including:
 - * Illegal activities
 - * Personal hobby, mutual benefit, and for-profit groups (AKA businesses)
 - * Partisan activity that supports or opposes specific political parties and/or candidates for public office
- * Organizations that require clients of, or participants in their programs to be of a specific faith or religiously affiliated
- * Animal welfare organizations (e.g. animal sanctuaries, organizations that train or utilize service animals, dog or cat shelters, etc.)

What we look for in our grantees (or Funding Criteria)

MRG Foundation seeks to *primarily fund* grassroots, community-led organizations that focus on:

- * **Community Organizing for Progressive Social Change**

Social change organizing addresses the root causes of critical social justice issues by bringing people together and building power to change political, social and economic systems that perpetuate injustice.

Social change organizing is a relative term and it takes different forms in different communities. No matter the community, however, social change organizing almost always involves some form of leadership development, base building, and collective action.

- * **Dismantling Oppression(s)**

Institutionalized and intersecting oppressions based on race or ethnicity; immigration status or national origin; gender and gender orientation; class; religion; and disability status are the primary tools that capitalism and patriarchy use to perpetuate injustice. While MRG recognizes the multidimensionality of oppression, we ask all applicants, regardless of issue or geographic area, to name ways in which their organizing work challenges structural and institutional racism.

MRG funds groups that are proactively confronting their privilege and dismantling oppressive structures both within their own organization as well as in the broader community.

Again, we recognize that this commitment looks different across different communities and issue areas, but we prioritize funding to groups led by Black and Indigenous people of color (BIPOC), especially those who are women and femmes, low-income, immigrants and refugees, living with disabilities, LGBTQ2SIA+, and youth.

In addition, we are looking to fund organizations that can:

- * **Be strategic and impactful**

MRG prioritizes funding groups that will have a deep impact in their community and that, if funded, will be effective in moving their social change work forward.

- * **Be organizationally effective**

We are looking to partner with groups that will be able to accomplish what they set out to do. We look for groups that have an organizing plan, the skill and capacity to accomplish their goals, and a concrete fundraising plan.

- * **Build and/or support movements**

Grassroots, community-based groups are much more successful when they are part of a

broader movement for social justice. Effective movement building requires that groups understand how their work fits in with other social justice issues and communities. As groups grow and develop, we expect them to build deep relationships and partnerships with other groups working on the same and broader issues.

*** Understand—and are committed to—community leadership**

We believe that the people most impacted by an issue are best suited to address it. MRG asks all applicants, regardless of issue area, to show how the leadership of their organization represents the people most impacted by the issues they're trying to solve.

Grant Types

Our grant funding can be used for operating support or for special projects. However, because of IRS restrictions, we cannot give operating support grants to organizations that are not registered as 501(c)(3).

If you are a fiscally sponsored group, the fiscal sponsor must apply for a project support grant. However, your organization, as the “project,” can use the funds for either a project or for general operations.

Maximum Grant Amounts

*** *Operating Support***

The maximum grant amount is \$15,000 per year.

*** *Project Support***

The maximum grant amount is \$15,000 per year for fiscally sponsored and 501(c) (3) groups and \$7,000 for groups that have neither federal tax-exempt status nor a fiscal sponsor.

All requests must round to the nearest \$100. For example, instead of asking for \$7,375, please round it up to \$7,400.

Grant Terms

As a fundraising foundation, it is extremely difficult for us to anticipate what our grantmaking budget will be more than a year in advance. While we would love to give multi-year grants, we unfortunately are not equipped to do so.

For that reason—and to make it easier on ourselves and our grantees—our grants are all 12-month grants.

Future Work

Please note that all proposals must be for work that will start after December 2019.

Timeline & Important Dates

<i>August 2</i>	Fall Cycle Launch! Applications, instructions and materials are made available and organizations can start completing and submitting them for consideration!
<i>September 13</i>	Deadline to apply. If you are mailing applications, they must be <i>postmarked</i> by September 13.
<i>October 17-18</i>	Decline letters sent. Finalists who make it to the next round will receive a phone call and should get ready to schedule a site visit.
<i>Oct. 21-Nov. 13</i>	Site visits (in person, over the phone or via video chat) with finalists.
<i>November 15</i>	Presentation Day (location to be confirmed). Most—though not all—finalists participate in Presentation Day. Please plan on having representatives there in case you are invited to attend.
<i>December 2-6</i>	Final notifications, grant agreements sent, and checks mailed.

MRG's Grantmaking Process

Activist-Led Grantmaking

MRG's grantmaking process is different than traditional philanthropy's. Instead of Program Officers, we rely on a committee of volunteer activists and organizers from across the state to make funding-related decisions within a movement-building context.

Our [grantmakers](#) come from, and are representatives of the communities and sectors we seek to invest in. In addition to serving as grantmakers, they often work together, looking for connections among issues and connecting activists and organizations all over Oregon.

Our grantmakers assess each grant proposal and determine finalists based on MRG's Eligibility and Funding Criteria (see page 2). They also conduct site visits with finalists, attend Presentation Day and make final funding recommendations to MRG's Board of Directors.

Review Process

We wish we could fund every group that applies for funding. Unfortunately, our budget is limited so we must select applicant groups that are most aligned with our funding ethos.

Our grantmaking has a two-step process: once we receive initial applications, grantmakers will select a few finalists that will go on to receive site visits and (maybe) give presentations on Presentation Day.

Historically, most—but not all—finalists end up receiving funding from MRG.

Site Visits

If your group is selected to be a finalist, you will meet with one or two of our volunteer grantmakers for a site visit, which may be conducted in person, over the phone or via video conference. A site visit (or field interview) provides MRG with the opportunity to learn more about and connect with your group and answer questions that grantmakers may have raised about your initial proposal.

Site visits don't have a "hidden agenda," nor are they intended to intimidate groups. They are informal and laidback get-togethers where the hope is to get to know each other better.

Presentation Day

Presentation Day is an opportunity for prospective grantees from across the state, community members, MRG staff and board, and donors to meet one another and learn about each other's work and programs. This is when we invite several finalists to present their proposals to the full Grantmaking Committee.

Presentation Day is Friday, November 15. Please plan on having someone there to present on behalf of your organization, just in case you are invited.

Application Packet

Your application packet **MUST INCLUDE:**

*** Your Grant Application**

The application form can be [downloaded by clicking here](#).

NOTE: Please make sure you download the application before completing it in Adobe or another PDF application. Otherwise it may not save properly.

*** Required Attachments, which are:**

- * Most current operating budget ([here is a sample budget](#) if you need one)
- * Financial statements (if your group has them)
- * [Action Plan Worksheet](#), if you filled one out
- * Staff and board list

AND ALSO

- * If you're applying for a Project Support grant:
 - Project budget ([here is a sample project budget](#) [second tab] if you need one)
- * If your group has 501(c)(3) status:
 - IRS Letter of Determination. (If you've applied for an MRG grant before, you do not need to submit one.)
- * If your group is fiscally sponsored:
 - IRS Letter of Determination of fiscal sponsor AND fiscal sponsorship agreement/letter. (If you've applied for an MRG grant before and your fiscal sponsor is still the same, you do not need to submit these.)
- * If your group is neither fiscally sponsored nor a 501(c)(3):
 - The names and contact information of three references, preferably community leaders, who support your work or can speak about your group.

Optional:

- * You may attach up to three additional documents (photos, flyers, annual report, etc.) that may help us understand your work.

How to Apply

Submit your complete application package (application form and all required attachments), preferably saved as a PDF...

- * Via e-mail to grants@mrgf.org. Please use the subject, “[Org Name]’s Fall 2019 Grant Application.”
- * Via regular mail to:
MRG Foundation
P.O. Box 12489
Portland, OR 97212

The deadline to apply is Friday, September 13, 2019 at 11:59 p.m.

Mailed applications must be postmarked no later than September 13.

Questions?

Please read this guide and/or our [website](#) carefully, and [check out our FAQs](#) before contacting us. If you still have questions, send us an email to grants@mrgf.org (preferred) or call us at 503-289-1517, ext. 3.

Some Terms We Use (and What We Mean by Them)

Community or Social Change Organizing

To us, community or social change organizing means building and strengthening connections within or across a group of people—mobilized by identity or issue related to systemic oppression—working to inform and empower one another to change the world we live in.

Groups that are engaged in community organizing generally seek to change root causes and systems, rather than or in addition to providing a direct or immediate need. For example, giving out food boxes to hungry families is worthy and important; however, we are interested in how a group will organize food recipients to resolve the root causes of hunger: poverty, low wages, lack of space for food garden, food deserts, etc.

Movement Building

Movement building exists to build collective power of impacted communities. When MRG talks about movement building, we refer to the ways in which social justice work intersects and how those intersections inform, transform, and deepen one's analysis of their group's issues.

Understanding how your group's work fits with other social justice issues and communities builds a stronger collective movement for justice and liberation.

Cultural Preservation Organizing

Cultural preservation organizing seeks to preserve and share cultural traditions as a way to build strength and resiliency in communities whose cultures have been and continue to be marginalized or silenced. It can also be used to organize a community to resist assimilation/colonialism and promote social justice ideals that lead to community organizing for social change.

Cultural preservation organizing work will be considered if it meets our funding criteria and is being done by people from that cultural community.

Art as a Tool for Organizing

Art can inspire people to see the world in new and different ways and may strengthen social justice ideals and the larger movement. Art is also used as an organizing resource for those who experience injustice to explore and represent their experiences and share their work with community, potential allies, and people with power.

Social justice arts groups can apply to MRG if the work meets our funding criteria and is rooted in community organizing.

Economic/Worker Justice Organizing

We will fund groups addressing economic justice issues, such as the fair treatment of workers, immigrant workers' rights, paid family leave, etc. However, **we cannot fund direct union organizing**, such as direct support of striking workers or conducting personal visits to advocate for a union vote.

Voter Education and Registration

Voter education refers to activities that educate voters about ballot measures and candidates for public office. To be considered for MRG funding, such activities must be strictly neutral and non-partisan. 501(c)(3) organizations are not allowed to try to influence the outcome of an election for a candidate for public office.

Voter education and registration work will only be considered if you have your own 501(c)(3).

Lobbying

Proposals for lobbying or including lobbying will only be considered if:

- * You (or your fiscal sponsor) has a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status; AND
- * You (or your fiscal sponsor) has elected to be covered under the 501(h) election; AND
- * The funds from MRG are not earmarked for lobbying, and the dollar amount of the non-lobbying activities exceeds the amount of the grant requested from MRG.

If your organization applies for work that includes lobbying, but does not have 501(c)(3) and 501(h) documentation, your proposal cannot be funded.

For more information, contact Bolder Advocacy (www.bolderadvocacy.org). We encourage you to contact your legal advisor to securely utilize your 501(h) benefits.