Georgia's Own Foundation

Grantmaking Guidelines

Vision

Since 1934, Georgia's Own Credit Union has been committed to our "people helping people" philosophy. We not only strive to serve our members' financial needs, but to give back to our communities through financial assistance and volunteer hours.

Georgia's Own Foundation (the "Foundation") is the fundraising and grantmaking arm of Georgia's Own Credit Union. Our vision is:

Improving things that matter.

Mission

Georgia's Own Foundation, Inc. only grants funds to nonprofit organizations that operate programs that meet our community involvement objectives. Our mission statement is:

The mission of Georgia's Own Foundation is to implement the Credit Union's "people helping people" philosophy by raising funds and supporting programs that help people get ahead, get involved, and own their future.

Giving Focuses

At least 85% of the Foundation's grants are made to two areas:
- Children, Youth, & Young Adults
- Education (with an emphasis on financial literacy)

Each year a small amount may be allocated outside these areas to "Discretionary." This category enables the Foundation to respond to unplanned opportunities and test new giving categories.

Areas in Which We Invest—Outcomes & Program Categories

The Foundation's directors have identified specific outcomes that it desires to see achieved within each Giving Focus.

Outcomes are the changes in behavior, skill, knowledge, attitude, or situation for persons served by a program. Georgia's Own Foundation considers a grant based upon the outcomes the grant would provide the community. This has resulted in program categories in which grants are usually made.

CHILDREN, YOUTH, & YOUNG ADULTS

Outcomes
- Persons with health problems receive high-quality medical care.
- Young people engage in experiences that foster health and wellbeing.
- Children and youth develop character and/or a sense being a good citizen.

Program categories
- Youth empowerment
- Community awareness and education regarding health and medical issues
- Camps, retreats, get-aways, for sick young people
- Seminars, courses, and training programs

- Others will also be considered

EDUCATION

Outcomes
- Children, young people, and adults increase their financial literacy.
- Adults implement practices of financial planning and prudence.
- Elementary, middle, and/or high school students' educational outcomes improve.
- Poorly-performing youth learn curriculum content and/or acquire study skills.
- At-risk youth develop skills, knowledge, and attitude necessary for success in life.

Program categories
- After-school mentoring or tutoring programs
- One-on-one mentoring programs targeting at-risk youth
- Live seminars, courses, and training programs
- Websites and internet-based courses
- Public events that bring attention to financial responsibility and/or facilitate access to financial resources in the community

Whom We Support—Qualified Nonprofits

Generally, a successful applicant will be a qualified organization that meets the following requirements. It:
- Is a recognized legal entity (a nonprofit corporation).
- Has 501(c)(3) exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service.
- Is governed by a board of at least five persons, with a majority who are independent; in any case not more than three non-independent persons. Non-independent members are persons who are staff or family members of another board member or staff person.
- Does not discriminate in service provision by race, color, creed, gender, national origin, or sexual orientation.

The Foundation will not consider proposals from:
- Labor or fraternal organizations
- Political organizations
- Individuals for scholarships (but the Foundation will consider supporting a scholarship fund operated by an organization)
- Individuals for sponsorship in a fundraising project

What We Fund—Program Business Categories

The Foundation will fund programs, or portions of programs, operated by qualified organizations (see above, "Whom We Support—Organizational Requirements"), that generate outcomes that the Foundation's directors desire to see achieved. The Foundation will consider proposals to support programs in the following business categories:
- Operation of existing programs (proven programs)
- Development, pilot testing, start-up, and/or expansion of programs (higher risk)
- Projects or programs that have difficulty obtaining conventional funding (speculative programs)

Typically, the Foundation does not fund the following:
- Overhead, capacity building, infrastructure (except as a part of program grant)
- Capital projects, technology
- Remediation of financial problems, paying off debt, providing working capital

The Foundation will not consider requests for:
- General operations, undesignated funds
- Salary for a specific person
- Sensitive, controversial, or potentially harmful projects, or ones that pose a potential conflict of interest to the Credit Union
- Explicitly religious programs that advance a particular faith

Conforming Programs
A conforming program is one that meets all the above criteria. The program:
1. Operates within one of the Foundation's two *Giving Focuses*
2. Delivers *outcomes* that the Foundation desires
3. Is conducted by a *qualified nonprofit*
4. Complies with one of the Foundation's three *program business categories*

Grant Size
In recent years, Georgia's Own Credit Union has made at least 50 grants annually, averaging over $1,000 each for established grantees. Grant sizes are typically in the range of $200 - $5,000, though larger grants have been made through special fundraising events such as a golf tournament.

The Foundation Directors intend to follow this general pattern, and desire to make grants that "make a difference" within a supported program. However, the first grant to a new organization may be smaller than subsequent grants.

How We Work
The Foundation welcomes unsolicited *Grant Proposals* to fund conforming programs that generate desired outcomes.

Also, from time to time, the Foundation itself may identify programs in which it desires to invest due to the outcomes the program achieves. It does so by reviewing past grantees, conducting research on effective programs within its Giving Focuses, and through referrals. In such cases it will solicit a proposal.

See our *Grant Proposal Process* document for details on how to submit a *Letter of Inquiry*. The Foundation reserves the right to modify its standard processes for small grants in the Discretionary area.

Decision Criteria
Foundation Directors will consider the following factors when reviewing *Letters of Inquiry* and *Grant Proposals*:
1. The outcomes the program generates for the persons it serves
2. The "return on investment"—what outcomes are expected from a grant of a particular size
3. The risk associated with generating the outcomes
4. The impact that a grant would have on the program (currently and in the future)
5. Alternative investments the Foundation could make

The first step to be considered for a grant is to submit a *Letter of Inquiry* (see more below).

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Grant Proposal Process

If you qualify for a grant by operating a conforming program (see *Grantmaking Guidelines* to check), you may apply for a grant. The process is different for **small grants** up to $5,000 and for **regular grants** larger than $5,000.

Process for Small Grants

All applicants complete a simple process for small grants. A *Small Grant Proposal* is completed and, along with up to five supporting documents, submitted to a local Credit Union branch manager or the Foundation office. The procedure is summarized below.

1. A *Small Grant Proposal* is submitted.

2. The Foundation reviews the *Small Grant Proposal* for:
   i. conformity to granting guidelines, and
   ii. its projected program outcomes

3. The Foundation conducts limited due diligence on the organization and the program for which it has proposed a grant.

4. Foundation staff carefully consider the *Small Grant Proposal*, and decide:
   i. recommendation for approval or denial
   ii. if approved: terms, conditions, changes to the *Proposal*
   iii. grant size

5. Quarterly, the Foundation directors will review the proposals recommended by staff for funding. A two-thirds vote of directors is required for approval.

6. A *Distribution Agreement Letter* is sent to organizations with approved *Small Grant Proposals.*

7. A *Notification of Decline Letter* is sent to unsuccessful applicants.

8. Upon return of the signed *Distribution Agreement Letter*, a check will be issued.

Process for Regular Grants

Each applicant for a regular grant of more than $5,000 will fit within one of two categories:
- Self-initiated applicant
- Foundation-invited applicant (generally, prior grantees)

The starting point for a self-initiated applicant is a *Letter of Inquiry*. Once a *Letter of Inquiry* is submitted and approved, self-initiated and Foundation-invited applicants follow the same procedure, as summarized below.

For Self-initiated Applicants
1. Applicant submits a *Letter of Inquiry* (see p. 2 for instructions).

2. The Foundation responds with an invitation to submit a *Grant Proposal*, or a denial.

For Foundation-invited Applicants
3. The Foundation invites the applicant to submit a *Grant Proposal.*

All Applicants
4. A *Grant Proposal* is submitted (see p. 3 for instructions).

5. The Foundation reviews the *Grant Proposal* for:
   i. conformity to granting guidelines, and
   ii. its projected program outcomes

6. The Foundation conducts due diligence on the organization and the program for which it has proposed a grant.

7. Foundation staff carefully consider the *Grant Proposal*, and decide:
    i. recommendation for approval or denial
    ii. if approved: terms, conditions, changes to the Proposal
    iii. grant size

8. The Foundation directors will review the proposals recommended by staff for funding. A two-thirds vote of directors is required for approval.

9. A *Distribution Agreement Letter* is sent to organizations with approved *Grant Proposals*.

10. A *Notification of Decline Letter* is sent to unsuccessful applicants.

11. Upon return of the signed *Distribution Agreement Letter*, a check will be issued.

Preparing a Letter of Inquiry

Qualified applicants with a conforming program may submit a *Letter of Inquiry* regarding a proposed grant. This is for self-initiated applicants; if the Foundation asks to you apply for a grant, this step is skipped. Currently, *Letters of Inquiry* are accepted through December 31st, for consideration during the first quarter of the following year.

A *Letter of Inquiry* must meet the following guidelines:
1. Created on your organization's official letterhead

2. Signed by the CEO, a vice president, or a member of the senior management team

3. Not more than two pages in length, using standard type

4. Include no additional attachments (exception: a core values statement may be included)

5. Submit here. ***Be sure to include organization name in the subject line; ex: Letter of Inquiry: [organization name]***

The *Letter* must address the following topics:
1. **Purpose.** The purpose, or mission, of the organization.

2. **Organization Profile.** What it is and what it does.

3. **Organizational Strategy.** The approach the organization uses to achieve its mission (high level only, details not required).

4. **Population Served.** The primary persons served by the organization and their need for services (what problems you address).

5. **Program Description.** Snapshot of the program for which you seek support—what it seeks to achieve, for whom, and how.

6. **Outcomes.** What outcomes the program achieves for the persons served—changes in behavior, skill, knowledge, attitude, or situation.

7. **Use of Funds.** The exact purpose for which funds would be requested.

8. **Contact Person.** The name and contact details for the person who would submit a *Grant Proposal*, if approved (the Foundation will respond to this person and copy the author of the *Letter of Inquiry*, if different).

9. **Website.** The organization's website, or the program's if it has a separate site.

10. **Affirmation.** Statement that the program for which you seek funding is a Conforming Program (see *Grantmaking Guidelines* for the definition).

Many of the above items may be expressed in a single sentence—significant explanatory detail is not required. Other information may be included so long as the *Letter* does not exceed two pages.

Preparing a Regular Grant Proposal
Any organization that has been invited to do so may submit a regular *Grant Proposal* (one for more than $5,000)—this applies to self-initiated applicants with an approved *Letter of Inquiry* and Foundation-invited applicants. Currently, *Grant Proposals* are accepted through December 31st, for consideration during the first quarter of the following year.

A regular *Grant Proposal* is made up of four forms:
- *Grant Proposal Cover Form*
- *Organizational Due Diligence Questionnaire*
- *Supporting Documentation*
- *Request to Support a Program*

FIRST-TIME APPLICANTS
Complete all four documents.

RE-APPLYING APPLICANTS, YEARS 2 & 3
Complete only two forms: the *Grant Proposal Cover Form* and the *Request to Support a Program*.

RE-APPLYING APPLICANTS, YEAR 4
If the *Organizational Due Diligence Questionnaire* and its *Supporting Documentation* are more than three years old, complete the updated organizational due diligence process to submit a *Grant Proposal*. This is made up of five forms:
- *Grant Proposal Cover Form for Revised Due Diligence*
- An updated version of your organization's original *Organizational Due Diligence Questionnaire*
- *Revised Organizational Due Diligence Questionnaire*
- *Revised Supporting Documentation*
- *Request to Support a Program*

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Table of Required Forms

The following table summarizes the forms needed to submit a *Small Grant Proposal* or a first-time or re-application *Grant Proposal* for a regular grant.

Type of Application	Forms Required							
	Small Grant Proposal	Grant Proposal Cover Form	Grant Proposal Cover Form for Revised Due Diligence	Organizational Due Diligence Questionnaire	Revised Organizational Due Diligence Questionnaire	Supporting Documentation	Revised Supporting Documentation	Request to Support a Program
Small grant (up to $5,000)	X							
Regular Grant (larger than $5,000)								
First-time Applicant		X		X		X		X
Re-applying Applicant, Years 2 & 3		X						X
Re-applying Applicant, Year 4			X	Revised	X		X	X

Submission

All forms must be submitted through georgiasownfoundation.org.

GEORGIA'S OWN
FOUNDATION

Grantee Responsibilities

Distribution Agreement Letter

Once a *Grant Proposal* has been approved for funding, the Foundation will prepare a *Distribution Agreement Letter*. The successful applicant must agree to the terms and conditions in the *Letter*. These include such matters as reporting, authorized use of funds, what happens if the program changes, and other matters.

Use of Funds for Overhead Expenses

The Foundation does not make grants that primarily pay for organizational overhead. However, it is willing to support two forms of "overhead":

- Indirect *program* expenses such as rent and utilities for program staff, a proration of insurance costs for the program, office supplies used by the program, etc.
- Up to 10% of a grant for organizational overhead (must not include indirect program expenses)

At the applicant's discretion, these may be included in a *Grant Proposal*. If you have any questions about this, feel free to email the Foundation.

If overhead is included and approved, funds may be used as authorized. Funds may not be assigned to these categories if they were not explicitly included in the *Grant Proposal* and approved.

Reporting

The Foundation values reports from grantees as they inform the Foundation what is being achieved with its charitable investments. It is important that reports are completed correctly and in a timely manner as specified in the *Distribution Agreement Letter*.

A format for reporting is provided with the *Distribution Agreement Letter*. Grantees must follow the simple format.

Inability To Use Funds as Intended

On occasions, for unforeseen reasons, funds cannot be used as intended. This could be because the program is off schedule, personnel are not available, partners have withdrawn, hiring has been delayed, key resources are not available, the allocation of funds to various budget lines has proven inaccurate, or any number of other issues.

Once the grantee determines that it will not be able to use the funds as intended it must promptly contact the Foundation. The Foundation will work with the grantee to identify and implement a solution. Options include authorization of budget changes, revising the schedule (and outcome expectations), or returning some (or all) funds. Grantees should understand that the Foundation is investing in outcomes, not providing general funding; thus, funds can usually be retained when promised outcomes will be delivered, but not when outcome achievement is seriously compromised.

Core Values

The following values guide the work of Georgia's Own Foundation.

Member Focus
We invest in programs that create a better community for our members. When your life and community improves, you are better able to reach your financial goals.

Optimistic Outlook
We view the future positively and believe that there are fine organizations serving our communities that exhibit honesty, enthusiasm and integrity—these are the nonprofits in which we will invest.

Outcomes Oriented
We want to see changes that improve the lives of our members and their neighbors, so we care about the outcomes created by programs we support.

Beyond Money
We believe that the human touch is important alongside financial investment, so we encourage volunteerism and make grants; we look for true collaboration where we can help beyond "writing a check."

Foundational Integrity
We believe that integrity should not just be a word, a claim, but rather the currency with which we earn the trust of those we serve, so we strive to exhibit it and encourage it in our grantees.

Social Responsibility
We want to help the Credit Union improve what matters to you, be a good corporate citizen, and do what is right.

Innovation
We deeply desire to do corporate philanthropy better, to bring the best thinking to the table, and to make more difference with less dollars, and then to keep on giving.