



COMMUNITY
FOOD BANK
OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA

Thriving Communities GRANT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

The Thriving Communities Grant from the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona (CFB) seeks to support organizations and projects working to build thriving, healthy communities.

Grant awards support projects that strengthen the local food system, provide community education, and/or support emergency food distribution efforts. Funding may be used for a wide range of activities, including infrastructure, training, education, advocacy, pilot programs, evaluation, and more.

We hope this FAQ guide, as well as other resources such as the [Grant Overview for Applicants on our webpage](#) will be useful as you consider applying to the Thriving Communities Grant.

Who is eligible to apply for a Thriving Communities Grant? Does my organization have to be an official CFB partner?

You don't have to be an official CFB partner to apply! We are excited to fund both organizations we already know and work with, as well as folks we haven't worked with before.

Eligible applicants:

- ✓ Are working in Cochise, Graham, Greenlee, Pima, and/or Santa Cruz Counties.
- ✓ Have not received 3 or more Thriving Communities Grants since the 2022 award round.
- ✓ Are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, tribal entities, schools, churches, and mutual aid/community collectives.
 - Groups without 501(c)(3) status or a fiscal sponsor may request sponsorship through CFB's Avanzando LLC on the grant application. Space is limited, and requests will be reviewed based on need and funding barriers. If approved, a 5% sponsorship fee will be deducted from the grant and should be included in the total for your project budget.
- ✓ Are operating with an annual budget under \$1 million.
 - Groups that have 501(c)(3) status through formal association with a larger tax-exempt organization (e.g., a university, school district, church network, or national nonprofit) may not qualify. To be eligible, the organization named on the IRS Determination letter must have a budget under \$1 million annually.

Food is my primary need. Should I apply for the Thriving Communities Grant?

If food is your primary need, we encourage you to explore opportunities to become a formal food distribution partner with CFB. [CLICK HERE to fill out a Partner Interest Form](#) or [email fst@communityfoodbank.org](mailto:fst@communityfoodbank.org) with inquiries.

Providing food to partners through low or no-cost streams is a separate and key piece of CFB's work. As stewards of community resources, CFB leverages donations and bulk buying power to source large amounts of quality food for food distribution partners at reduced rates not available in stores or small volume purchases.

We understand that some food or other single-use supplies may be critical to a project's success. **In these cases, applicants can request up to 10% of the budget for such items.**

My organization does not work with food. Can I be considered for a grant?

Yes! We recognize there are many disparities impacting the overall health and wellness of communities across Southern Arizona. Grant awards support projects that strengthen the local food system, provide community education, and/or support emergency food distribution efforts. Funding may be used for a wide range of activities, including infrastructure, training, education, advocacy, pilot programs, evaluation, and more.

The Thriving Communities Grant funds projects that focus on one or more of the following:

- Strengthening the local food system
- Provide community education related to health, access to services, food production and nutrition.
- Supporting emergency food distribution efforts such as infrastructure improvements, capacity building, and dignified service delivery

What constitutes a collaborative project?

A collaborative project is one involving the active participation of two or more distinct organizations/groups in which each party has a clear role. As part of the application process for a collaborative grant, we provide a Letter of Collaboration template to be submitted by each participating entity, describing their specific role in the project. Collaborating entities do not have to be located in the same geographic area and don't have to be similar types of organizations – they must only demonstrate how their roles complement one another to fulfill the project's overarching goal.

The "lead applicant" is the one who will submit the application under their organization's/group's profile in Grant Interface and be the primary contact for the project.

Do you require that applicants submit their organizational budgets in addition to a grant application?

We require only a very simple project budget, which we provide a template for on the application. We do not require an organization's total budget, annual expenses, profit and loss statements, etc. Please note, however, that groups with operating budgets over \$1 million are ineligible for this grant. All lead applicants must self-attest as to whether their organization has an operating budget of less than \$1 million on the grant application.

I work for a regional branch of a larger nonprofit organization with offices throughout the state/country. My branch's annual operating budget is under \$1 million, but our main or "umbrella" organization operates over \$1 million annually. Are we eligible to apply?

In this case, because you are already a member of a larger organization with opportunities and access to resources, you would **not be eligible** to apply as the lead applicant on a project. The same goes for an individual school within a larger school district or university, or a church that is a part of a network of churches operating over \$1 million annually.

Organizations that are not eligible on their own due to their individual budget or their organizational network's budget can, however, be a collaborator on a project where the main applicant is an organization or group operating with under \$1 million annually. In this case, the application and budget should clearly demonstrate what components of the project each entity is contributing to, and the main applicant should be managing the majority of the funds.

Can for-profit entities apply for this grant, or do they need to apply in collaboration with a nonprofit?

We don't fund for-profit businesses who apply as individual applicants or lead applicants on a collaborative project. All main applicants must be nonprofits or fiscally sponsored by a nonprofit. A for-profit entity CAN be a collaborating partner as long as the project explicitly demonstrates direct impact to the community.

How many grants will be awarded for this year's grant round?

We plan to fund **up to \$450,000** in total awards this grant round.

Does my project goal need to be short-term or long-term?

It could be long-term, short-term, or a combination of both. It is important that an applicant is very clear about what issue they are working to address, who the project is meant to benefit, and what impact it will have in their community. If awarded, project funds from the Thriving Communities Grant should be spent within 1 year of award receipt.

In assessing potential community impact of a project, how does CFB define “community”? For example, we are a behavioral health agency that serves over 3,000 clients, and they need help. Since we only serve a targeted clientele, would we still be eligible for a grant?

‘Community’ is a fluid term that can refer to *any* group of persons, and any place within our service area. Some ways former applicants have defined community include: students; individuals facing homelessness; refugees; senior citizens; residents of X neighborhood or persons within an agency’s service area; a tribal community; women entrepreneurs; local growers; LGBTQ+ youth.

If our organization has separate programs, can we apply for more than one grant for more than one project, or can we only apply for one grant as an organization?

An organization should submit only 1 application as the lead applicant. If your organization has several project ideas, we ask that you work together to narrow them down to one grant application. Your proposal can involve multiple components as long as the goals are clear.

If your organization is working with other entities, you may also participate as a collaborator on another organization’s application that they submit and are the lead applicant on.

If I plan to buy a piece of equipment with grant funds, does the equipment have to be new, or can it be used but in good working condition?

We trust our partners to determine for themselves what is needed and what will work best for them; the important thing with equipment purchases is to tie them in a concrete and explicit way to the goals of your project and illustrate their potential impact.

If there is overlap between projects or grant applications, do you connect organizations that are working on similar issues?

There have been times when we have identified organizations working on similar issues; on occasion, we have connected them. As we strive to increase the resiliency, reach, and diversity of our partner network, we will keep our eyes out for opportunities to build more of these connections in our community. We also hope that spaces such as Info Sessions and the annual event held for awardees will act as opportunities for community networking.

My organization received a CFB grant in a prior grant round and, in realizing our project, we've identified additional financial need. Can we apply for this next round of Thriving Communities grants?

Those who have not received 3 or more Thriving Communities Grants in the last 4 years (since the 2022 grant round) are welcome to apply again. In a case where you'd like to apply for another grant award to continue an existing project, it is relevant to share what you accomplished with past funding, what you've learned through the process, and how this relates to any additional funding you're seeking. Application evaluators will be curious to know in what ways an additional year of funding would build upon your previous project's accomplishments and/or your organization's work overall.

If your organization has received 3 or more Thriving Communities Grants in the last 4 years, you are not eligible to apply this year. If you need help determining your eligibility, please reach out to partnergrants@communityfoodbank.org.

What is the timeline for the grant round?

- Applications are accepted annually on [Grant Interface](#) from 9:00am on the second Wednesday of October through 6:00pm on the second Wednesday of December.
- Funding decisions are communicated to applicants by the end of March of funding year.
- Awarded funds sent by end of April.*

*If an awardee received a grant in the previous grant round, the check will be mailed after they have confirmed full spending of the previous award on their Final Report submission and submitted their Grant Agreement for the new award to Grant Interface.

What if I get hung up during the application process or want to share my progress with others in my organization before I submit it?

You can share what you've done with others in your organization at any point. You don't need to complete your application in one sitting—you can save anytime, plus the Grant Interface site will automatically save your progress after every 100 characters typed. Use the "collaborate" button on the top right of your draft application to invite others in your org to have editing access.

It's my first time applying—I got familiar with the application preview on the CFB Grants & Loan Opportunities webpage but what I should expect from Grant Interface?

[Check out this handy Applicant Tutorial!](#)

It covers everything from creating an account to submitting an application, and more!

NEED FURTHER ASSISTANCE?

If you have any additional questions or issues while filling out the application, please reach out to us at partnergrants@communityfoodbank.org