

2017 Letter of Inquiry Guidelines

About Communities Foundation of Texas

Established in 1953, Communities Foundation of Texas (CFT) is a public charity that administers over 900 philanthropic funds established over the years through gifts and bequests from donors in Dallas and across the State of Texas. CFT is a hub for collaboration between donors, nonprofits and other funders to stimulate creative solutions to key community challenges.

Grants from CFT are disbursed from several different types of funds—donor-advised, designated and discretionary funds—all designed to help donors achieve their specific charitable goals and to meet community needs. The most popular type of fund at CFT is the donor-advised fund. Grants from these funds are awarded by recommendation from the fund’s donor, often in consultation with CFT staff. In order to assist the foundation in its efforts to share information about timely community needs with our donors, we invite nonprofit organizations in the Dallas Fort Worth area to submit Letters of Inquiry outlining critical funding needs each year. Information submitted by nonprofits will be shared with donors whose interests align with their specific areas of focus. In addition, we summarize recommended projects in the Giving Guide, which is available online for anyone in North Texas to use when making decisions on how to make an impact locally. A limited number of requests submitted through the letter of inquiry (LOI) process will also be funded by CFT using the foundation’s discretionary funds.

Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in CFT’s LOI process, the applicant must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Have a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt designation from the Internal Revenue Service **that has been active for two years as of September 1, 2017.**
2. At least 50% of the population served must reside in Dallas, Tarrant, Denton, Collin or Rockwall Counties.
3. Churches and religious organizations whose primary mission is exclusively evangelism are not eligible to participate.

Types of Grants Awarded

Grants awarded from CFT’s donor-advised and discretionary funds can support program needs, capital projects or operating expenses.

Requests that meet the following criteria will receive priority consideration for potential funding from the foundation’s discretionary dollars:

- Collaborative projects that provide greater leverage for philanthropic investments
- Strategic, data-driven programs and initiatives
- Demonstrated ability to create measurable impact
- Requests that address a particularly timely need
- Programs and initiatives that offer innovative or creative solutions to key community challenges

Application Process

LOIs **must be received** at CFT offices (5500 Caruth Haven Lane, Dallas, 75225) or by e-mail to grants@cftexas.org by **5 PM** on **April 3, 2017**. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. Applications submitted by facsimile will not be accepted. LOIs are initially reviewed by a staff subcommittee. Applicants will be notified if more information is needed regarding the funding request. The Foundation’s Board of Trustees makes all final decisions regarding approval of grant recipients.

KEY DATES	<p>January 9: 2017 LOI/Giving Guide application available at www.cftexas.org/apply-to-be-in-the-giving-guide</p> <p>February 28 @ 9-11 AM and 2-4 PM: LOI workshops at CFT offices</p> <p>April 3 @ 5 PM: Deadline to submit LOIs to grants@cftexas.org or at CFT offices (5500 Caruth Haven Lane, Dallas, TX 75225). You will receive a confirmation e-mail within 24 hours of receipt.</p> <p>December 31: All agencies notified about discretionary grants</p>
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2017 Letter of Inquiry Instructions

Your Letter of Inquiry must include the following components. You will be notified if additional information is needed. Please do not call for status notification. *Alternatively, you may submit a Common Grant Application (sections I-IV only – no attachments), available at www.cftexas.org/nonprofit-resources.*

I. Contact and Summary Form

You must use the form provided or the Common Grant Application. Alternative versions of these forms will not be accepted.

II. Narrative

The Letter of Inquiry should follow the outline below. The narrative should be **no more than two pages long**. Additional pages will not be considered. **Please do not use a font smaller than 10pt.**

A. Background/History: Describe your organization, including a brief description of your organization's history, major accomplishments, experience and expertise.

B. Describe your current funding needs and priorities through December 2017.

Please highlight up to three funding priorities. As part of your descriptions, please include the following information (as applicable), in either narrative or bullet form:

- Number of unduplicated individuals served
- Demographics of population served
- Geographic area served
- Total agency/program budget numbers
- Amount of funding being raised for the activity, against how much has been raised to date
- Timeline
- Specific goals and objectives
- How you will measure success

C. Select the ONE funding need/priority that best matches CFT's priority criteria, outlined below, for discretionary funding (non-donor advised), and explain how it fits with what CFT is looking for in grantees? *NOTE: If the needs for which you are requesting funding do not meet any of the above criteria, simply leave this question blank. We may have a donor that is interested in just what you are doing, whether your request aligns with CFT's funding priorities or not.*

- Is your program/project collaborative? Are there ways that an investment from CFT would provide greater leverage for other philanthropic investments?
- Is your request strategically driven? Is the program/project data-driven?
- Has your agency demonstrated the ability to create measurable impact in this (or a similar) area in the past?
- Does your program address a particularly timely need?
- Does your program/project/initiative offer an innovative or creative solution to a key challenge in the North Texas community?

Please do not include any other attachments, whether using the above format or the Common Grant Application.

Your Letter of Inquiry must be received by e-mail (grants@cftexas.org) or at the CFT offices (5500 Caruth Haven Lane, Dallas, 75225) **by 5 PM on April 3, 2017.**

If you have questions about the LOI application process, please contact grants@cftexas.org or 214-750-4229.

2017 Letter of Inquiry Contact and Summary Form

Application Deadline: April 3, 5 PM

Organization	EIN
Mailing Address	
Site Visit Address (if different from mailing address)	
Name and title of person responsible for compiling the application	
Telephone(s)	Fax
E-mail	Website
Executive Director	Board President / Chair
Mission Statement	
<p>Please provide summary bullets highlighting up to three of your agency's current funding needs as listed in the narrative, in priority order. For each, please include total amount of funding needed and amount raised to date.</p>	
Total Agency Operating Budget	
Executive Director's Signature	Date

Note: Electronic signatures will be accepted.

Please attach your 2 page narrative. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.