

## **Hartford Foundation for Public Giving General Operating Support Grantee Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Why does the Foundation offer General Operating Support grants?**

The Foundation sees General Operating Support grants as an opportunity to be responsive to the broad needs of nonprofits in the community we serve. General Operating Support is consistent with the Foundation's mission and expands and complements our existing grantmaking strategies and tools. We recognize that agencies often struggle to sustain gains. General Operating Support has the potential to improve overall services to the community by strengthening an agency's infrastructure, staff and systems.

### **What is General Operating Support? What amount is generally awarded?**

General Operating Support grants provide unrestricted support to an organization's mission and are directed toward an organization's operations as a whole. They are an alternative to the Foundation's other major form of grantmaking, three-year, declining program grants. By their nature, General Operating Support grants are more flexible than traditional project grants. General Operating Support will also be offered as three year grants, but level funding for each of the three years. The amount of funding depends on an agency's size and financial condition and is consistent with the Foundation's guidelines for regular grants. The process for applying and receiving these grants will be highly competitive.

### **What are the criteria you use to determine eligibility for General Operating Support?**

Eligibility for General Operating Support grants is consistent with the criteria for other unrestricted grant funding. These grants are more competitive than other regular grants. In addition, agencies are expected to meet the following criteria:

- Have an annual operating budget over \$200,000;
- Have a current strategic plan with a minimum of one year remaining;
- Have had successful outcomes with a regular Foundation grant in the past;
- Be in good financial condition (we understand that this is a nuanced issue, please call us if you have any questions);
- Meet the requirements of the Foundation's governance diversity policy;
- Demonstrate organizational and leadership stability;
- Have an overwhelming majority of services in our funding region (29-town Greater Hartford region);
- Be able to demonstrate community benefit of the organization's work and have a track record of positive outcomes;
- Be willing to participate in a site visit including the agency's executive director, board chair, and Foundation staff;
- Be willing to participate in an ongoing independent evaluation of their progress as well as periodic meetings as required by the Foundation.

**What is the relationship between General Operating Support and other grants offered by the Foundation?**

General Operating Support grants are considered a regular grant just like project and capital grants. It is a grant option that nonprofits can consider when they are eligible to make a three-year request to the Foundation. An agency must meet the same requirements as any other regular grant as well as adhere to the criteria for General Operating Support. Agencies must make a choice between applying for General Operating Support and another regular grant.

**If I am not eligible for a General Operating Support grant, can my agency still apply for other types of grants?**

A General Operating Support grant request is not necessarily the best choice for every agency. An organization's leadership may need to spend time planning and reflecting before they apply or they may find it more beneficial to pursue funding for a specific project, which can often be implemented and evaluated more easily. The decision regarding what type of grant to pursue is highly individualized. A discussion with program staff early in the decision making process can help you assess your agency's needs and eligibility and make the best choice for your agency.

If your agency is ineligible for General Operating Support at this time, it is important to have a conversation with a program officer about the specific issues your organization may want to address to become stronger. The Foundation offers resources for agencies through our Nonprofit Support Program that may be helpful. It is important for agencies to note, however, that General Operating Support awards are highly competitive and meeting the basic eligibility requirements will not guarantee an award.

**What is the process for applying for General Operating Support?**

Please see the General Operating Support Grant Process document on our website.

**Is there a deadline?**

GOS is offered on a rolling basis like the rest of our regular grants.

**If you have questions about General Operating Support:**

Contact Tara Sundie, Community Investments Senior Associate, at (860) 548-1888.