



Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation Grant Application Instructions

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I - LETTER OF INQUIRY – NEW GRANTS

The Letter of Inquiry may only be submitted through our website, through the link included under “How To Apply – Step Two.” If you are a first time applicant, you will be asked to enter your e-mail address and create a password. You must then enter your organization’s Tax ID number and take our eligibility quiz. You will then be asked to provide specific information about your organization and request. The basic fields you will need to complete are included below to help you prepare for the process. (A printable copy of the complete application form is available on our website under “How To Apply – Application Forms” should you find it easier to fill in the exact form before going on-line, but you will need to re-enter the data on-line).

Organizational Information

Organization Name - Your legal name will be automatically entered from the IRS database based upon your tax id number. You may change this here to the name you are currently using if it is different.

Legal Name - This will be automatically filled in based upon your tax id number.

Address, Phone Number and E-mail

Tax ID – This will carry over from your initial entry

Organizational Background - Please include your mission statement, briefly describe your major goals and activities, and include total expenditures, the number of employees, and the number of individuals served per year/estimated number that benefit from your work. (word limit = 250) Note: you may want to type this in advance and cut and paste it into the on-line form.

Annual Budget - What is your projected organizational budget for the year in which your grant would begin?

Contact Information (This will be repeated for CEO, Board Chair & Program Contact)

Name, Title, Phone & E-Mail

Program Information

Program Title - This is the short name or title for your program. You may simply call it general operating support if the purpose is to support your organization's overall operations.

Purpose of Program/Request - Please describe the purpose of your program or request in one sentence. Again, you may simply call it general operating support if the purpose is to support your organization's overall operations.

Total Amount Requested - If your request is for more than one year, include the total amount being requested over the entire grant term.

Grant Term, Including Anticipated Program Start & End Dates

Estimated Number of People to be Directly Served by the Program - You may leave this field blank if your program is not providing a direct service to individuals.

Geographical Area Served – You will be asked to select from a drop down menu

Geographical Area-Watershed - If your program is structured around a watershed, you may select from the drop down menu(s) the choice(s) that best describe(s) your area (you may choose up to 3).

Total Program Budget - Estimated or actual budget for the program
(if your request is for general operating support, restate your projected budget for the year in which your grant would begin)



Program Information – Narrative

Need for Program

Briefly describe the need for the program/the problem to be addressed (word limit = 300).

Note: you may want to type this in advance and cut and paste it into the on-line form.

Program Outcomes

Describe the ultimate results (outcomes) that you are trying to achieve AND the activities you will provide to help achieve these results. You may list up to 5 outcomes. Word limit = 100/outcome & activity. Please use the following format: Type "Outcome:" and then describe the outcome in one sentence. Make sure to state this as an outcome - result - and not a process or activity. For example, rather than "Create a strategic plan" state "A strategic plan"]. Next type "Activities:" and list the activities that you feel will lead to the outcome.

Please type the Outcome and Activities as one paragraph and do not use bullets or numbers.

Note: you may want to type this in advance and cut and paste it into the on-line form.

Authorization for Request

"Signature" of CEO, Executive Director or Board Chair - By typing in the CEO/Exec. Dir. name below you are verifying that they have authorized this Letter of Inquiry

"Signature" Date - Please enter today's date

Attachments

You must also upload pdf files of the organization's most recent audited financial statement and a word or pdf file of the organization's current board list.

You should be notified within two to four weeks as to whether we are able to invite a Proposal based upon your Letter of Inquiry.

II - PROPOSAL – NEW GRANTS

You must submit the Proposal through our website through the URL provided in your Proposal Invitation Letter. Paper requests will not be accepted. However, unlike the Letter of Inquiry, which is an on-line form that asks you to fill in specific information, the Proposal will be a separate document prepared by you in the format of your choice and then uploaded through our website.

The Proposal must not exceed a total of ten pages, and should include the information listed below. Alternatively, the Proposal may follow the Michigan Common Grant Application format (available through michiganfoundations.org) or, if a proposal for the same project has been submitted to another foundation, you may repeat that format as long as the use of the Erb Family Foundation's grant funds is specified. Some of the Proposal information duplicates information included in the Letter of Inquiry and may be copied from your LOI. Any changes made from the LOI should be summarized in the space provided on our on-line Proposal Application Form.



Proposal Content

Organization – Briefly describe your organization, including its mission and major goals and activities. Make sure to include your projected organizational budget, number of employees and the number of individuals that are served per year/estimated number that benefit from your work.

Purpose – State the purpose of the program/request in one sentence.

Amount Requested - State the amount requested and number of years (see Section III below - Grant Term).

Need – Briefly describe the need for the program/the problem to be addressed.

Activities and Outcomes – Describe the ultimate results (outcomes) that you are trying to achieve and, providing as much detail as possible, the services and/or activities you will provide to help achieve these results. If applicable, cite evidence that the proposed services/activities are likely to lead to the desired outcomes. Such evidence may include, for example, research or proven models (see also “Evaluation” - below).

Coordination with Other Resources – Acknowledge similar, competing or complementary existing programs or organizations, if any, and explain how your agency or service differs or adds value, and what effort will be made to work cooperatively. Identify all organizational partners in the project and their roles, and, if applicable, supply critical letters of support (for example if the program will take place in a school, a letter from the superintendent – please do not send in general letters of support) or memoranda of understanding. These letters/memoranda will not count towards your ten page limit.

Population Served – Identify the projected age range, geographical area and number of individuals to be served or affected.

Board and Community Involvement – We believe that the most successful organizations and programs are those that fully engage their Boards of Directors and that involve residents of target communities in program (and, ideally, organizational) planning, leadership and implementation. Please describe your policy and practice regarding (1) board members’ financial or other commitment to the organization and (2) engagement of the community in your work, including not only in the program design and implementation, but also in organizational (i.e. board or committee) leadership.

Evaluation – Explain how the activities and the outcomes of your project will be measured and reported. State who will perform the evaluation (it may be internal staff or an outside consultant) and describe how the results will be used and shared. Ideally, your evaluation should be used for organizational learning as well as to prove the project’s effectiveness.



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Include or cite past evaluations if this is an existing program or evaluations of similar programs upon which the model is based. Please see Section VI – Post Grant Award Requirements for more information about our expectations regarding evaluation.

Continued Financial Support – The Foundation generally will fund programs for a limited, defined term. Please describe your plans for securing other sources of support for the program both during the term of our grant and following the end of the grant term. Your plan should go beyond a general statement, and outline a timetable of specific activities. Like evaluation, the plan for continued support is an integral part of your program design.

Attachments - The attachments do not count towards the ten page limit

- Detailed project budget using the Foundation’s Proposal Budget Form (available on the “How To Apply - Forms” section of our website) or any other format that includes similar specificity. If more than one year of funding is requested, submit a proposed budget for each year (recognizing that as the program develops, there may be a need to revise the budget).
- Organization’s internal operating budget for current (and upcoming year, if available), including detailed expenses and revenue.
- (Optional) – An evaluation report of your program or organization or of a similar program upon which your model is based, articles, photographs or other materials that will help us to better understand the program.

Please do not send additional materials by mail, though we would like to be added to your mailing list (e-mail distribution is preferable where possible). We often visit organizations new to us and can pick up supplemental materials then, if necessary.

III - GRANT TERM

The Foundation generally will fund new programs for a limited, defined term, so your initial request should include adequate time for program start-up (typically one to three years depending on the complexity of the program). Exceptions may be considered, on a very limited basis, and the Foundation will initiate this discussion if it is an option. Otherwise, grants will not be renewed beyond the conclusion of the grant term. In the case of general operating support, we typically will award such grants on a year-to-year basis and will be open to considering continued renewal as long as the organization’s work furthers progress towards one or more of the Foundation’s Desired Outcomes and resources permit.

Multi-year grants are subject to annual review by the Board and are contingent upon satisfactory progress of the program and compliance with Foundation reporting requirements (see section IV).



IV - MULTI-YEAR GRANTS

If you have been awarded a multi-year grant, you need not submit a full Proposal each year. However, the Board will review the grant each year, and may elect to discontinue grants that are significantly underperforming (have not made progress towards stated outcomes) and have not attempted to identify the reasons for, and develop a plan to correct, the under-performance. We will therefore require a Progress Report that, at a minimum, answers the questions listed below. You may use whatever format you prefer, as long as you cover each of these points. The report should be cumulative - for example, if you are in the 20th month of a 36 month grant, you should aggregate the information for the entire 20 month period. We will contact you if we are concerned with any issues raised in your progress report, so that there is adequate time to attempt to rectify the situation before the Foundation's Board meets to review the grant. The report must be submitted by e-mail. Paper copies will not be accepted.

- What activities have taken place/services have been provided since the beginning of the grant? Please be sure to specify the number of people served, the units of service provided and any other relevant quantifiable data.
- Which of the results or outcomes identified in your proposal have occurred (recognizing that it may take a full year or longer before some of these are observable)?
- What challenges or disappointments did you encounter?
- What changes, if any, have you made or do you anticipate making to the project described in your proposal and why?
- What specific steps have you taken towards securing additional and ongoing funding for the project, and what steps do you plan to take over the next year?
- List program expenditures and revenue to date, following the original budget submitted with your proposal, showing variances if any (remember, you must request prior approval from the Foundation for significant changes to your budget – for example providing transportation instead of hiring new staff).
- Attach a copy of your most recent audited financial statement if we do not already have it. Also include links or references to publicity and other materials regarding the program that would be helpful in improving our understanding of the program and/or that include recognition of the Foundation.



V – GRANT APPROVAL PROCESS – TIMING

The Foundation's Board of Directors meets four times a year to review grant requests, generally in March, June, September and December. A grant request typically should take two to five months to process from the time that the Letter of Inquiry is submitted, though certain requests may take longer. If the Proposal is not ready for a particular meeting because there are outstanding issues, we will make every reasonable attempt to resolve those issues in time for the next following Board Meeting.

VI – POST GRANT AWARD REQUIREMENTS

All grantees will be required to sign a Grant Agreement Letter. The Grant Agreement Letter will incorporate the Proposal by reference, and these documents will constitute the Grant Contract. Grantees may select the start date for their grant, as long as it is within the same Foundation fiscal year (FYE June 30) in which the grant was approved (except that grants approved at the June Board Meeting may not begin earlier than July 1).

A Progress Report generally is required for every six-month period covered by the grant, though that timing may be adjusted for Renewal and Multi-Year grants to coincide with the Board Meeting where they are to be reviewed and the requirement may be waived altogether for recurring, general operating grants. A Final Report is required two months after the conclusion of the grant. The Progress and Final Reports should cover the questions included in Section IV – Multi-Year Grants. The Foundation will likely schedule a site visit at some point during the Grant Term. We also encourage regular, ongoing communication as needed.

A note on our Reporting Requirements/Program Evaluation: We have attempted to develop a practical approach to program evaluation. While most programs likely will not require a formal, outside evaluation, we do expect a thoughtful process and written report. Program evaluation provides ongoing, systematic information that strengthens projects during their life cycle and provides outcome data to assess the extent of change. Evaluations should include both process and outcome components, meaning that they will document the development and operation of the program (process) as well as measure the program's impact (outcomes). The purpose of our Reporting Requirements are therefore: (1) grant monitoring – to assure that funds are being spent as planned, (2) measurement – to help assess the impact of the grant (3) organizational learning - careful collection and use of data should help ongoing program development and refinement.