Frequently Asked Questions

Dane County COVID Recovery Grants Program

The Dane County COVID Recovery Grants program uses federal grant funds allocated to the county to help nonprofits affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. MCF is administering the grants on behalf of the county. Here are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about the program.

Where does the funding come from?
Dane County has been allocated federal grant funds under the State and Local Government Assistance Program included in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

My nonprofit is based outside Dane County. Am I eligible for funding?
No, your organization must be a Dane County 501(c)(3) public charity to apply.

We are not based in Dane County but do provide services within Dane County. Are we eligible to apply?
No, the agency must be housed in Dane County to be eligible to apply.

We are based in Dane County but our service area is outside the county or outside the country. Are we eligible to apply?
You must be operating in Dane County and serving Dane County residents to apply. If you provide services in and outside Dane County, use your agency expenses but describe your Dane County scope and funding deficit in the narrative.

What is the review process and timeline?
Applications will be reviewed in a three-tier process. Grant review will start with MCF staff, then recommendations shared with external panelists familiar with the Dane County nonprofit community and, finally, recommendations will be approved by Dane County staff.

May we apply through a fiscal agent?
No, we are only accepting applications from established 501(c)(3) organizations.

We use a fiscal year that doesn’t correspond to the calendar year, what should we do?
Please do your best to transition your costs into calendar year contrasts.

Why do you ask for our IRS/audit information?
We want to ensure that all agencies are filing required Internal Revenue Service (IRS) forms. Also, while we are not asking for copies of these materials for the application, we reserve the right to request copies if you receive funding.
Our organization has multiple programs. May we apply for each program?
Each organization may only submit one application.

We are applying for a grant but haven’t yet filed our Form 990 for 2020. What should we enter?
Please enter your 2020 revenue and expense information as best you can and indicate which form you eventually will be filing.

Our agency received federal funding related to the pandemic. Does this disqualify us from applying?
No. While we will give preference to those agencies that have not yet received federal COVID-based assistance, we anticipate that a high percentage of applicants will have been through prior relief rounds.

Should we include PPP and other federal COVID-related funding as revenue?
Yes.

If we received a PPP loan and it was forgiven, do we need to consider that as and include it in our revenue for 2020?
Yes. Please include all federal COVID recovery funds in your budget revenue.

Our fiscal year is from July to June. Should we show revenue/expenses for the calendar year or for our organization’s fiscal year?
Please use the calendar year for your budget numbers in the application. The 2019/2020 budget contrast was specified by the county and allows for a better budget comparison between agencies and for the pandemic timeline. We understand this may add some complexity but hopefully you can provide the annual budget snapshot. Contact us at dcfund@madisongives.org if you have difficulty with this part of the application.

Should we include ticket sales in our “Fundraising Event Revenue” amount?
No, tickets sales are earned income, not philanthropy. We are looking for charitable gifts (individuals, corporations, foundations, events) for this question.

Our 2019 and 2020 expense and revenue numbers are irregular because of pandemic conditions (furloughed staff, canceled seasons, discontinued programming) and may not offer an accurate picture of our finances. What should we do?
We understand that this is an issue and encourage you to make your case in the narrative portion of the application. The narrative is really designed as a budget narrative – what special circumstances did you encounter and how did that effect your overall revenue gap?

Why do you ask for the race of our organization’s leadership?
Various studies have found that disproportionately fewer businesses and nonprofits led by people of color applied for or received federal COVID assistance during the pandemic. We are committed to encouraging a wide variety of organizations to apply for funding and will share demographics with the county after the grants are awarded.
What is the difference between annual fundraising revenue and fundraising event revenue?

Annual fundraising includes all philanthropic dollars raised, generally from four categories: individuals, corporations, foundations and events. This does not include earned revenue, only outright donations, grants, sponsorships, etc. Part of the overall annual fundraising is from events, which most nonprofits rely on as an important part of their fundraising, especially since it is generally unrestricted giving. So, the first number will be the larger, overall philanthropic donations, the second number is a subset of that amount.

If our organization has several separately run programs under its umbrella, would we provide overall financial info for the whole 501(c)(3) or just for the program running a deficit that took on increased expenses?

Use your agency’s overall financials. In the narrative you can explain more about the particular program and its financial losses/expenses.

We submitted our application. What are the next steps?

You will receive email confirmation once you’ve submitted the application. If you do not receive an email, please contact us. We anticipate that review will be completed by late August and checks will be distributed in September. We will contact grant awardees if we have questions about your proposal or need to see a copy of your audit or Form 990.

What are the reporting requirements if we are awarded a grant?

Unlike many grant awards, which are based on impact indicators and new programs, funds received from this program are unrestricted. Therefore, you will not be required to fill out a final report. However, we do encourage you to send a thank you and agency update to Dane County for establishing this program for the nonprofit community.

Need more information?

If you have further questions, please email us at dcfund@madisongives.org.