



GRANT OPPORTUNITY

Stronger Organizations

Supporting Organizational Operations, Infrastructure and Stability

Open from Jan. 20 to Feb. 17, 2026

This grant opportunity supports the overall strength, stability and effectiveness of nonprofit organizations which contribute to the long-term wellbeing of Western North Carolina. It supports organizations that play a meaningful role in the region's ecosystem through work in housing, education, economic opportunity, and health & wellness, and that are positioned to sustain, adapt and grow their impact over time.

The grant's flexibility enables organizations to maintain core operations, respond to evolving community needs and prepare for the future. For this application cycle, we are supporting organizational operations, infrastructure and stability as nonprofits continue to recover and rebuild in a post-Hurricane Helene environment.

Organizations determine how best to use the funds to advance their mission and organizational health. Funding can support core operations, infrastructure, advocacy/policy efforts, program expansion, or other priorities identified by the organization. Reporting is simplified, and the support is flexible by design to meet a range of needs across the organization. This grant is best suited for established organizations with a demonstrated track record that are looking to strengthen and grow their capacity for long-term impact. Most often, these grants are in the form of general operating support.

Grants will typically range from \$50,000 to \$350,000 per year for up to two years. For two-year grants, the total award may range up to a maximum of \$700,000. These amounts reflect typical funding ranges and are not guaranteed. Not all applicants will receive the amount requested or be funded for the full two years. Some grants may be awarded for a single year, and in some cases, the second year of a two-year grant may be a reduced amount. Funding decisions are based on several factors, including organizational readiness, proposed scope of work, strategic alignment, and available resources.

Who is eligible to apply:

Organizations that have never received Dogwood funding; Dogwood grantees with active general operating support grants that end on or before June 30, 2026; 501(c)(3) nonprofit public charities with annual operating budgets of at least \$200,000 that serve the Qualla Boundary and/or the 18 counties of Western North Carolina and are strategically aligned* with Dogwood's priorities. Please refer to [our FAQs for a comprehensive list of the 18 qualifying counties](#).

In general, Dogwood does not fund more than 25% of an organization's annual operating budgeting each year. Therefore, given the minimum grant size of \$50,000 annually, organizations with annual operating budgets below \$200,000 are ineligible. Please see more details in the FAQs under the section, "How much can I apply for?"

Who is not eligible:

Government and quasi-governmental organizations; colleges and universities; fiscally sponsored organizations; houses of worship and religious organizations.

***What is a Strategically Aligned Organization?**

For both the Stronger Organizations and Organizational Capacity Building grant opportunities, applicants must demonstrate they are strategically aligned with Dogwood's mission and values. This includes:

1. Organizations must have substantial operations, impact or presence in at least one of the 18 counties or on the Qualla Boundary. Please refer to the FAQs for a comprehensive list of the qualifying WNC counties.
2. Organizations must advance one or more of Dogwood's strategic priorities in housing, education, economic opportunity, and/or health & wellness as central to their mission or work.
3. Organizations must show a meaningful commitment to engaging, serving and reflecting communities that have been historically disinvested or disconnected. This includes ensuring that those most affected by inequities have influence in leadership, program design and/or decision-making.

While many organizations work in one or more of Dogwood's strategic priority areas, funding decisions are guided by more than thematic alignment alone. Priority will be given to organizations that are strategically aligned as defined above and whose work, approach and presence in the region reflect a strong fit with Dogwood's long-term vision. We also consider the broader context, including community needs, the organization's role within the local ecosystem, and what we have already committed to in the region. Each grant opportunity has its own distinct set of criteria and funding priorities as outlined below.

What we're looking for:

1. **Alignment with Dogwood's Long-Term Vision:** Organizations that clearly demonstrate how their work contributes to a Western North Carolina where every generation can live, learn, earn, and thrive—with dignity and opportunity for all. Alignment means more than working in a priority area; it reflects a deep connection between the organization's efforts and Dogwood's broader vision for regional wellbeing, and community-rooted solutions. Strong applicants will explicitly describe how their work advances meaningful, lasting improvements in housing, education, economic opportunity and/or health & wellness, grounded in the realities and leadership of the communities they serve.
2. **Organizational Readiness for Growth or Stabilization:** Established organizations with a demonstrated track record that are actively planning for their future, whether by reinforcing a stable foundation, adapting to changing community needs, or pursuing strategic growth. These organizations are not simply maintaining the status quo; they are taking intentional steps to strengthen their operations, deepen their impact, and position themselves for long-term effectiveness.
3. **Role in Regional Infrastructure:** Organizations that play a significant role in the region's nonprofit ecosystem—through direct service, advocacy, coordination, or systems-focused work—and contribute meaningfully to community wellbeing and collaborative efforts across sectors or geographies.
4. **Strong Community Relationships and Collaboration:** Organizations that demonstrate a commitment to working in coalition, leveraging partnerships, and contributing to broader community and systems change goals.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

The following questions make up the Stronger Organizations grant application. They are included here as a preview. All applications must be submitted through Dogwood Health Trust's website at <https://dogwoodhealthtrust.org/grantmaking>.

1. Tell us about the key aspects of your organization's work and how they contribute to your organization's mission. In your response, please share how your work is helping to create a region where every generation can live, learn, earn and thrive, with dignity and opportunity for all?
2. How does your organization's work connect to one or more of Dogwood's strategic priorities — housing, education, economic opportunity and/or health & wellness? How does this work strengthen the communities you serve in Western North Carolina?
3. How do you stay engaged with and accountable to the community you serve?
4. If awarded a Stronger Organizations grant, how would your organization use it to strengthen your operations, increase effectiveness, or adapt to current challenges over the next 12 to 24 months?
5. What do you hope will be different in your organization, your community, or among the people you serve as a result of this grant?