

GULF COAST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

FY26 Grant Guidelines

Through partnerships with local nonprofit organizations, Gulf Coast Community Foundation seeks to transform our region through bold and proactive philanthropy. Gulf Coast's grantmaking is designed to make the greatest positive impact in our communities. Funding areas include: health and human services, arts and culture, civic and economic development, education, and the environment. Preference will be given to projects addressing Gulf Coast's current priorities of Affordable Housing, Mental Health, and Water Quality & Access to Green Space. [Read our 2023 Regional Scan here.](#)

Who may apply for a Gulf Coast grant?

Organizations serving Sarasota County, Charlotte County, DeSoto County, Boca Grande, Lakewood Ranch, and Longboat Key, Florida that are classified as tax-exempt public charities by the Internal Revenue Service are eligible to receive funding.

First-time applicants, please contact us for guidance prior to completing an application at CommunityLeadership@GulfCoastCF.org

Are schools and classrooms eligible to receive funding?

Individual schools, booster clubs and/or classrooms are not eligible for funding. Gulf Coast is strongly committed to supporting academic excellence in our region's schools, and as a result we have made significant investments in systemic initiatives. Only grant requests submitted by authorized representatives of the Sarasota, Charlotte, and DeSoto County School Districts will be considered.

Are faith-based nonprofits eligible to receive funding?

Yes, for their efforts aligned with Gulf Coast's priorities. Participation in religious activities must be voluntary. Religious activities must not be a requirement within the program or event being funded. Grant funding may not be used for religious worship, instruction, or proselytization.

How much can a nonprofit request? Eligible nonprofits may request up to \$25,000 per fiscal year (July 1-June 30).

What is a Community Grant? Community Grants provide support for upcoming special events, programs and/or projects that will have a positive impact for the organization and our region.

What makes a successful Community Grant?

A Successful Grant:

- Includes a current Giving Partner Profile on www.thegivingpartner.org.

- Clearly targets one or more of Gulf Coast’s funding areas of health and human services, arts and culture, civic and economic development, education, or the environment. Preference will be given to projects addressing a priority area: Affordable Housing, Mental Health, or Water Quality & Access to Green Space.
- Applicant contributes toward the total project cost (through donors, other grants etc.).
- Includes measurable data to demonstrate impact.

What types of requests are NOT eligible for Community Grant funding?

- Medical research or disease-specific services
- Pass through organizations that redistribute funding
- Programs seeking to launch in Sarasota, Charlotte, or DeSoto Counties with no local partners attesting to the need

Applicants are asked to submit ONE application per year which should include all events, programs, and projects available for support between July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026.

Community Grant requests may be shared with interested donors for potential funding.

NEW grant application cycles are listed below.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Applications cannot be submitted between September 16, 2025 and November 30, 2025. The online grant portal will close on September 16, 2025. A new portal is scheduled to open on December 1, 2025, with a different service provider.

| Community Grant Application Deadlines | Grant Notification Dates |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| August 11, 2025 | October 2025 |
| September 15, 2025 | November 2025 |
| January 19, 2026 | March 2026 |
| April 20, 2026 | June 2026 |

How do organizations apply for a grant?

GULFCOASTCF.ORG/GRANTS

Questions? Email: CommunityLeadership@GulfCoastCF.org