

# GULF COAST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

## FY27 Grant Guidelines

Gulf Coast Community Foundation (Gulf Coast) partners with nonprofits to transform our region through bold and proactive philanthropy. We invest in ideas and organizations that strengthen our community across five focus areas: Arts & Culture, Civic & Economic Development, Education, the Environment, and Health & Human Services.

### Funding Opportunities

**Community Grants** – Program and event funding for nonprofits in our service area.

- Program Support
- Event Sponsorship

#### **Catalytic Grants**

- Catalytic Grants support bold, collaborative projects that create lasting regional impact. These grants typically exceed \$25,000. **Organizations must first submit a Letter of Inquiry (LOI) through our Grantee Platform.** Selected applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal. Not all LOIs will advance. *Receiving a Community Grant does not affect eligibility.*

#### **Initiative Grants**

- Gulf Coast creates and funds data-driven initiatives and projects to address our region's most pressing challenges – including Affordable Housing, Behavioral Health Response, Empowering Arts, and Protecting Our Natural Environment. **Initiative grants are by invitation only.** *Receiving a Community Grant does not affect eligibility.*

### Eligibility

Organizations may apply for Community and Catalytic grants if they are:

- Actively serving Sarasota, Charlotte, or DeSoto Counties, Boca Grande, Lakewood Ranch, or Longboat Key
- Designated as public charities by the IRS

#### **What Makes a Strong Application?**

- A current Giving Partner Profile on [The Giving Partner](#)
- Alignment with at least one of our focus areas: Arts & Culture, Civic & Economic Development, Education, the Environment, and Health & Human Services
- Clearly defined success metrics and specific, measurable outcomes
- Clear alignment with our mission to transform our region through bold and proactive philanthropy

**First-time applicants and those with questions are encouraged to contact us at [CommunityLeadership@GulfCoastCF.org](mailto:CommunityLeadership@GulfCoastCF.org) before applying.**

## **COMMUNITY GRANTS**

Each nonprofit within Gulf Coast’s service area may receive up to \$25,000 total per fiscal year (July 1-June 30) across Program Support and Event Sponsorship Grants combined.

### **Organizations may submit:**

- One Program Support application (up to two programs)
- One Event Sponsorship application (up to four events)

### **PROGRAM SUPPORT** *What strengthens an application?*

- A clear and compelling demonstration of community need aligned with at least one Gulf Coast focus area (Arts & Culture, Civic & Economic Development, Education, the Environment, and Health & Human Services)
- Evidence your organization is well-positioned to address the issue, including a strong track record locally
- Clearly defined outputs, outcomes, and success metrics

**Not eligible for Program Support:** *medical research or disease-specific services, pass-through organizations, projects outside our geographic service area, programs launching in our region without local partners, individual schools (all school requests must come from the office of the Superintendent), or organizations that require religious participation by beneficiaries or employees. Grant funding may not be used for religious worship, instruction, or proselytization.*

**Donor-Supported Funding** Some Program Support grant requests that have been reviewed and recommended by Gulf Coast but cannot be fully funded in a given cycle due to limited available funding may be shared with interested donors for additional support. This gives well-reviewed applications a second path to funding.

### **EVENT SPONSORSHIP** *What do we look for?*

- Broad community reach with measurable outcomes or meaningful impact
- Meaningful recognition for Gulf Coast and opportunities for donor engagement
- Clearly defined goals and sponsorship levels
- Strong participation from Gulf Coast donors
- Submitted with enough lead time to take full advantage of sponsorship benefits

**Not eligible for Event Sponsorships:** *sporting tournaments, events with limited community reach, individual schools or booster clubs, or organizations fundraising on behalf of another nonprofit.*

<b>Community Grant Application Periods</b>	<b>Grant Notification Dates</b>
May 1 - June 30, 2026	August 2026
July 15 - September 30, 2026	November 2026
October 15 - December 31, 2026	February 2027
January 15 - March 30, 2027	May 2027

**Ready to apply for a Community Grant?**  
Apply online at: [GulfCoastCF.org/Grants/ApplyNow](https://GulfCoastCF.org/Grants/ApplyNow)

## **CATALYTIC GRANTS**

### **What makes a successful Catalytic Proposal?**

We prioritize projects that are bold, ready, and impactful, evaluated across:

#### **Impact**

- Potential for meaningful, lasting change
- Focus on root causes

#### **Readiness**

- Organizational capacity and experience
- Clear, realistic implementation plan

#### **Collaboration**

- Strong partnerships
- Builds on existing efforts and avoids duplication of services

#### **Outcomes**

- Clearly defined success metrics
- Plan to track and learn from results

#### **Sustainability & Leverage**

- Continuity beyond the grant
- Ability to attract additional funding or partners

<b>Catalytic Grant Letter of Inquiry Deadline</b>	<b>Catalytic Grant Application Deadline</b>	<b>Grant Notification Dates</b>
September 14, 2026	October 20, 2026	December 2026
March 15, 2027	April 20, 2027	June 2027

### **Ready to apply for a Catalytic Grant?**

**Submit your Letter of Inquiry (LOI) at [GulfCoastCF.org/Grants/ApplyNow](https://GulfCoastCF.org/Grants/ApplyNow). Selected applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal. Not all LOIs will advance. Questions? Contact us at [CommunityLeadership@GulfCoastCF.org](mailto:CommunityLeadership@GulfCoastCF.org).**