



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### ELIGIBILITY

**Will you consider a proposal from a group of organizations collaborating on an initiative?**

Yes. One of the collaborating organizations must be the "lead organization," applying on behalf of the collaboration. The lead organization must meet all eligibility criteria, and must be willing to take on all the potential rights, responsibilities, restrictions and liabilities of the grant if it wins the award. The lead organization will not be able to submit a proposal outside of the collaborative proposal, and if this collaboration is selected to receive a grant, the lead organization will not be able to reapply in the following two years.

**My organization is faith-based. What restrictions apply regarding your grants for an organization like ours?**

Our grant guidelines state that we will not fund grants that are intended for "inherently religious activities." A faith-based organization should take steps to ensure that any inherently religious activities, such as worship, religious instruction or proselytization, are separate, in time or location, from the services that would be funded, wholly or in part, by an Impact Austin grant. Additionally, our grantees may not require program participants to attend or take part in any religious activities and may not discriminate against a current or prospective program beneficiary on the basis of religion or religious belief. Any participation in religious activities or events by recipients of Impact Austin's grant-funded services must be completely voluntary.

**Your guidelines indicate you will not fund capital campaigns. Will you fund capital expenditures as part of a proposal?**

Yes. We will fund capital expenditures that are clearly related to the proposed initiative.

**Your guidelines indicate you will not fund general construction or renovation. Will you fund construction or renovation as part of a proposal?**

Yes. We will fund construction or renovation expenditures that are clearly related to the proposed initiative.

**Once an organization receives a grant from Impact Austin, can it re-apply the following year?**

No. A grant recipient, or Community Partner, cannot submit another proposal in the following two years. There are certain exceptions; refer to the Grant Guidelines for Community Partner eligibility details.

**If we submit a proposal this year that is NOT funded, how soon can we submit another proposal?**

You may apply again in the next grant cycle. For example, if you are not selected for the spring grant, you may apply in the fall, as long as your application fits in the available focus areas.

## **FOCUS AREAS**

**Can you give us guidance on which focus area is appropriate for our proposal?**

No. We can't look at your proposal and advise you on selecting a focus area. Each organization must make that decision. Some proposals fit in more than one focus area. For example, an after-school music program for underprivileged students could fit into the focus areas for Community (cultural initiative), Education (learning) or Health & Well-Being (enhancing the lives of children).

Every year the number and quality of proposals submitted to each focus area varies. Because of that, it would be unfair, or could be perceived to be unfair, for Impact Austin to help any individual applicant choose a focus area.

In making your selection of the focus area, we recommend you consider which aspect of your proposal has the strongest impact.

**If we are not sure which focus area applies to our application, can we leave it blank and allow you to select one for us?**

No. As an applicant, you must choose one focus area based on the descriptions provided in the grant guidelines. We will not consider an application without a selected focus area.

**Can our organization submit grant applications in more than one category?**

No. Each organization may submit only one application per grant cycle. If the organization applies in the spring and is not selected, they may apply again in the fall if they fit into another focus area; likewise a fall applicant who is not selected may apply to another focus area in the spring.

## **APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

**The funding we need for our proposal is less than the amount of the Impact Austin grant. Can we submit a proposal for less than the full amount of our grant?**

No. The grant application guidelines stipulate that the organization must expend the full amount of the Impact Austin grant. We will not consider grants for lesser amounts.

**Do you give grants to initiatives that expend the funds over an extended period of time, greater than two years?**

No. As stated in our grant guidelines, the initiatives we fund must use the entire amount of the grant within 24 months.

**May I email, fax or mail my grant application to Impact Austin?**

No. The grant application must be submitted online via our grants management system, using the format provided by Impact Austin. To access our grants management system, please create an account to include your organization in future communications. Your contact email and password will allow you to enter the system for grant application submissions.

**Can I send additional materials with the application, like brochures or newsletters?**

No. Any additional materials will be discarded.

**Are we required to use the sample financial forms attached to the grant application?**

Yes. Wherever a requested attachment indicates "use the attached form," please use that template. This includes the Initiative Budget and Financial Narrative. We understand you may have the same information in another format, but putting the financial information in a common format for all proposals helps our committees review the information more efficiently and effectively. For Organization Financials, you may use your own documents or the Impact Austin template.

**What do we do if we do not have one of the attachments requested in the grant application, for example, a certificate of insurance?**

Include an explanation of why you do not have the attachment. The committee will take that explanation into consideration as they review the application.

## **GRANT REVIEW PROCESS**

**What is the Impact Austin process for deciding who gets the grants?**

We accept grant applications in four focus areas: Community, Education, Equity, and Health & Well-Being. Grant Review Committees are established every year consisting of Impact Austin members who review and evaluate the applications. The due diligence process includes research as well as site visits to three semifinalists in each category, with the final goal of selecting two outstanding finalists for each grant focus area. In 2021, this process will occur in both the spring and fall. Impact Austin trains all committee leaders and members on the Impact Austin grant review process and how to evaluate grant proposals.

After each Grant Review Committee selects its two finalists, all Impact Austin members receive a packet of information on the finalists for their review. Finalists each give a five-minute presentation on their organization and the proposed initiative. Then our members vote for the finalists of their choice in each grant area. We award the grant funds based on a simple majority vote.

**How do we know if Impact Austin will make a site visit?**

Site visits occur after each committee has selected semifinalists. The chair of the committee reviewing your grant application will contact you if your organization is selected for the site visit phase.

**If you reject our proposal for a specific problem, will you give us a chance to fix the problem?**

No. A rejection is final.

## COMMUNICATIONS

**What kind of communication can we expect from Impact Austin during this process?**

Until semifinalists are selected for site visits, all communication between grant applicants and Impact Austin is via the Nonprofit Coordinator by email ([grants@impactaustin.org](mailto:grants@impactaustin.org)). Impact Austin sends email notifications to each applicant confirming receipt of the grant application. Accept or decline notifications are sent by email as applications advance during the review process. After we select the semifinalists, most of the contact is through the grant review committee chairs. After finalists are selected, communication is through the committee chairs and Finalist Coordinator.

Impact Austin contacts applicants by phone or email if questions arise about the proposal. This communication is channeled through the Nonprofit Coordinator until we select semifinalists, and then communication comes from the committee chairs.

**Whom can we contact to discuss our grant application after we submit it?**

For questions regarding the grant guidelines, process or forms, you may email ([grants@impactaustin.org](mailto:grants@impactaustin.org)) or call us at 512-553-6083. If Impact Austin has questions about your grant application, we will contact you.

Impact Austin is committed to a fair, unbiased process. While we believe in treating every grant applicant respectfully, we will not entertain even a hint of any unfair influence. We reject any and all unsolicited communication related to topics other than questions about the guidelines, process or forms. We do not accept unsolicited phone calls for the purpose of clarifying information submitted in the grant application. Applicants must not contact members of Impact Austin, or the Impact Austin board, in any way unless and until Impact Austin contacts you for additional information. Applicants must not make any attempt to lobby for their proposal. Any attempt to unfairly influence the process is grounds for elimination from consideration.

**Can we get a list of the members of Impact Austin?**

No. We do not publish a list of our members.

## OTHER

**Why do grant requests have to include a line item for unrestricted funds equal to 20% of the total grant?**

Non-profits require unrestricted funds in order to maximize the success of initiatives and sustain the overall organization. The unrestricted funding also promotes a more accurate and realistic cost of the implementation of initiatives and on-going support needs of the organization.

All grant requests must include this line item so that all applications can be evaluated fairly. We want to ensure grant review committee members understand the importance of unrestricted funding and that all non-profits are on a level playing field. For example, if one non-profit submitted zero or some percentage less than 20%, and another non-profit submitted 20%, committee members may not assess the applications equally.

**Will Impact Austin be requiring grant recipients to document how the 20% unrestricted funds have been used?**

No, we will not be asking the grant recipients to document and report how the funds have been used.

**Impact Austin used to have distinct categories for Program Grants, Catalyst Grants and the Social Innovation Grant (SIG), with all grants awarded in June except for the SIG in November, and one award per category or focus area. What has changed, and why?**

Impact Austin has a history of innovative grantmaking, responding to the evolving needs of the community and improving the effectiveness of our grant processes. In 2021, Impact Austin is introducing a streamlined grant process whereby organizations can request funding for programs, capacity building initiatives, or both, in four focus areas: Community, Education, Equity, and Health & Well-Being. All categories will support applications from single organizations or collaborative groups of organizations. All grants will share common eligibility criteria, simplified application forms and updated review processes. In each focus area, 80% of the grant amount will be awarded to the finalist who receives the most member votes, to fund the proposed initiative; 20% of the grant amount will be awarded to the other finalist as an unrestricted grant. All budgets include a 20% allocation of unrestricted funds.

We are balancing our grantmaking with two cycles per year (spring and fall) and two focus areas per cycle, providing more flexibility for applicants and more opportunities for our members to be involved in grantmaking year-round. This also allows Impact Austin to balance our grant funds as we establish more flexible membership terms (such as monthly payments), and channel funds into the community more often.

Many of these changes were influenced by the unusual circumstances of 2020 – the pandemic, corresponding economic downturn, and anti-racism and social justice movements – as well as ongoing feedback from members, nonprofits and community leaders. The changes build on the strengths of our Program, Catalyst and Social Innovation Grants, and will make the grant process more efficient and provide more opportunities for applicants and Impact Austin members.