



## Ms. Foundation Grant Application Webinar Frequently Asked Questions

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### [Finance](#)

[What year's financials do you need?](#)

Please submit the most recent (no later than 2020) financial documents – i.e., your board-approved budget, 990 (if applicable), and audit (if applicable) – that you have available. (If you are unsure whether an audit or 990 is required of your organization, you may find the links provided in the Request for Proposals helpful.)

[What if my most recent audit is from earlier than 2020?](#)

Submit the audit document you currently have, when a more recent document becomes available, we ask that you share it with us.

[If we did not make enough to warrant an audit or complete the 990 post card, do we qualify to apply for this grant?](#)

Yes. Per the Request for Proposals, please submit the financials you share with your board.

[For fiscally sponsored projects, it sounds like you want the fiscal sponsor's financial documents \(990, audit\) but do you want the project's budget, rather than the fiscal sponsor's budget?](#)

We would like to see the project budget and the fiscal sponsor's 990 and audit.

[What is the total amount of funding available and the range that can be requested?](#)

In total we are on a 5-year journey, and this year (year 3) we are going to invest over \$1.5 million in the South. The range is from \$20,000-\$50,000. We will not be giving less than \$20,000 per grant. Our hope is that we will do two-year grants. With some, it will be 1-year.

[Can the funds be used to match funding to build an endowment in addition to general operating support?](#)

No, we will not be matching funds for an endowment. We are specifically looking to support organizing and movement building work.

[Does the organization have to have a minimum operating budget?](#)

We will evaluate applications on a case-by-case basis.

## Application

Where is the Request for Proposals link located?

At the bottom of the Ms. South Site linked [here](#), there is a link to the Request for Proposals document.

If I am a current Ms. South grantee, do I need to re-apply?

Current Ms. South grantees seeking a renewal may resubmit their Letter of Inquiry from the previous application cycle in lieu of the proposal narrative attachment. They must submit all other required attachments, per the Request for Proposals document located on our Ms. South site [here](#).

Why can't I access the application? Why do I get an error message when I click the application link?

The application has not yet gone live. We plan to make the application available starting December 2, 2022.

Is there a page limit for the Proposal Narrative?

We are looking for no more than 5 pages for the proposal narrative.

Is this opportunity mostly for staffed/larger orgs? Our organization is grassroots/community funded and I'm not sure if we have the structure you are looking for.

We are looking for 501c3 or fiscally sponsored groups. We support organizations that are a variety of sizes and structures.

If an organization as a 501c3 starts in 2023, does it qualify to apply?

We work with officially recognized 501c3 organizations. The deadline for this is January 13th, 2023. If you are able to submit your application with that letter of determination by January 13th, then yes, you are welcome to apply.

Would you consider a volunteer-driven organization? (a nonprofit that is a registered 501c3)

Yes.

Can 501c4 organizations apply?

No.

What should an organization with both a national office or a state office outside of the south and local presence include in the proposal?

Knowing the national office details is really important. We want to see that you have an office and staff people on the ground in the south and we are prioritizing organizations based in the south. We need to know the totality of the information.

We have co-executive directors who make the financial decisions. One is a woman of color and one is not. How does this fit into your leadership requirement? The online form only allows one Executive Director so wondering what is the best way to denote this on this form?

We currently fund organizations that use a co-director model. We will consider applications from organizations using a co-director model, provided that at least one of the co-directors is a woman of color. We want to look at your board composition, Executive Directors, and who makes the financial decisions for the organization, these are all weighed in.

If you wish to list the names of multiple executive directors in your application, you may do so in the Proposal Narrative.

Some but not all of our leadership is comprised by women and/or girls of color? Are we eligible?

The eligibility quiz will only allow you to proceed to the application if the following conditions are met:

- Your Executive Director (or one of your co-directors) is a woman or girl of color
- 75-100% of the financial decision-makers for the organization are woman or girls of color
- More than 50% of the people on your board (or the people who have fiduciary responsibility for your organization) are woman or girls of color

How might organizations doing feminist work in the South who are led by non-binary leaders of color fit into this grantmaking opportunity—leaders who have experiences of being read as “women” but don’t identify as such?

As per the Request for Proposals, we are shifting our grantmaking focus to building power and leadership of Indigenous, Black, Latinx, Middle Eastern, and Asian/Pacific Islander women, girls, and non-binary folks, both transgender and cisgender.

Will the programming have to be completed in 2023?

Grants are for general operating support and do not have to be connected to specific programming.

What specifically are you looking to see in the proposal?

The Request for Proposals provides some guidance on what it should look like: description of the organization’s work, outcomes that you can speak about to date, amount and time period of requested funding. This and more is included in the Request for Proposals document located on our Ms. South site [here](#).

Is there anything that should not be included in the proposal?

There isn’t anything that you shouldn’t include. We are trying to break down our own silos, which is why we have moved towards general operating support. We understand that after much conversation with grantees and know that work isn’t in just one area. Tell us about all of your work. Don’t silo yourself, be honest about the scope of the things you engage in.

How open is Ms. to seed funding for a new organization?

We pride ourselves on being a first funder. We have had grantee partners for years but we were one of the first funders with them. It’s important to us particularly in this initiative that we find emerging work because we know that in our role as an intermediary that we also help boost the visibility of groups to other funders and that this has helped our current grantees gain additional funding. We like funding new opportunities and our risk tolerance is high. We are seeking to have a big part of this portfolio to be new and emerging work.

How much money should I request? Can I ask for more than my annual budget?

We recommend that you ask for what you need, up to \$50,000 per year. The amount you ask for will not affect your chances of being funded. We are looking at your leadership and your work. If we choose to fund you but need to do so at an amount that is different than what you requested, we will do so.

What if I need help? Do you offer office hours?

Please contact us by email using the information provided on the last page of the RFP, which is available on our [website](#).

## Programmatic

Does there need to be a specific program or can it be for operating expenses?

For scope of work, these funds are for general operating. It is up to the grantee to determine the use of the resources.

Can the funds support research programs?

If advanced further, we would want to understand more about what that looks like. At the moment though, there wouldn't be an issue.

What types of organizations and programming has Ms. funded in the past?

We have funded a range of organizations and programming in the past. Organizations that are doing organizing, voter engagement work, direct service. There are multiple ways that Ms. provides support. A list of our grantee partners is on our [website](#).

Can nonprofit grantmaking organizations apply?

Nonprofit grantmaking organizations are not barred from applying, but in the past, we have tended to fund groups working directly in their communities.

Tell us more about what kinds of inequities you are trying to address with this open call?

We are trying to support the leadership of women and girls of color. When it comes to the proposals, we are relatively agnostic. We want to support organizing work, we want to support movement building work, but don't have a specific program area that we are trying to boost up.

Who has Ms. been working with in the South to understand those inequities?

We completed the [Pocket Change report](#) and assessed our own giving, and while we have given to organizations led by women, there was a percentage that could be increased and we want to particularly boost that.

We spent 6 months doing what we call Southern Landscaping. Our staff went on various trips to the south to do deep learning and out of that report, created 80-100 partners that worked with to do outreach and made an intentional effort to get to know people in the South beyond the usual suspects. The team went to Virginia, South Carolina, Alabama, and Louisiana in order to increase our knowledge in the South. Based on the Pocket Change report we reference in the Request for Proposals, we know that the south is one of the least resourced areas so we want to work to support the leadership there, which we know has the greatest impact in that region.

What is the scope of what can be included as far as advocacy? Are we permitted to discuss grassroots lobbying, administrative advocacy?

As indicated in the lobbying section of the application form, as a public charity, the Ms. Foundation for Women operates within IRS guidelines for lobbying activity. Ms. Foundation grantees may engage in lobbying activities permissible by IRS regulations. Filing a "501(h) Election Form" with the IRS allows a tax-exempt group to allocate a portion of its activities to lobbying without compromising its nonprofit status.

The Ms. Foundation for Women does not earmark grant funds to be used to influence legislation. However, grantees may use grant funds for advocacy efforts, including direct lobbying and grassroots lobbying, if

permitted by their award letter. Applicants will need to select the type of advocacy activities they will engage in in the dropdown menu of the “Lobbying Activity” section.

### Can you give an example of the leadership that you fund and how you support leadership structures?

A list of our grantee partners is on our [website](#). Examples of the organizations we fund are SisterSong, SisterReach, and National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, to name a few. A lot of these organizations are predominantly led by women and women of color including the board, the executive director, and those who make the financial decisions.

Ms. grantees have different leadership structures. This includes staffed organizations, collective models, organizing circles and coalitions. We do not fund one-person shops or individuals.

Given the general operating support nature of our grants, we like to create space for organizations to decide what makes the most sense for them and what the needs of their leadership are. The Ms. Foundation has also made opportunities available to have capacity building trainings that can have implications for leadership development.

### Can you give some examples of movement building and organizing that would be in alignment with your funding priorities for this proposal?

As examples of work current grantees have been doing: National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health does a lot of organizing in Latinx communities around immigration, building leadership; SisterSong does organizing around women of color, reproductive justice; URGE does organizing on campuses with young people. We are looking to support organizations who are working to build the skills of their community. We want to support larger movements, but are not proscriptive about what those movements are.

### Will you provide feedback on grant applications you do not fund?

Due to the volume of applications submitted, it is extremely unlikely that we will have the ability to provide individual feedback.