The Equity Fund

In 2026, the **Equity Fund** will invest in the resilience of organizations that are working to address systemic barriers facing Lancaster County residents. This grant program supports capacity-building initiatives such as training on culturally responsive practices, development of inclusive policies and procedures, community engagement strategies that center underrepresented voices, and organizational assessments to identify and address equity gaps.

Grants range from **$5,000 – $15,000**.

Virtual Office Hours

Questions? Join the Programs Team for our Virtual Office Hours. You may drop in at any time during either 90-minute session.

March 18, 10:00 – 11:30 am → Register Here
April 16, 10:00 – 11:30 am → Register Here

Eligibility Requirements

Applicant organization must:

- Serve Lancaster County residents without discrimination.
- Have current 501(c)(3) designation from the IRS.
- Be registered with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Charitable Organizations unless otherwise exempt per the Institutions of Purely Public Charity Act.
- Complete IRS Form 990 annually.
- Have an annual audit or a financial review by an independent CPA within the last 12 months.
- Be in good standing with all existing awards and contracts with the Lancaster County Community Foundation.
- Provide organizational Non-Discrimination Policy meeting all federal requirements as it applies to your type of organization (FAQs).
- Be aware of the Community Foundation's Anti-Hate Policy.

Visit our website for additional information about eligibility: Eligibility Requirements

Application Process

1. Submit an Eligibility Screen (formerly Letter of Intent) on our online Grant Portal by **11:59 pm** on **Wednesday, July 8**. You will be asked to provide basic organizational information and a brief description of your proposed project. If you would like to receive feedback on your application, please note the earlier deadlines listed below.
2. Within three (3) business days, Community Foundation staff will review your Eligibility Screen. Once your eligibility has been confirmed, you will be given access to the grant application.
3. Submit your application by the final deadline, **11:59 pm** on **Wednesday, July 15**.

Feedback & Important Dates

If you want to receive feedback from Foundation staff on your application, please observe these deadlines:

- June 10 – Submit Eligibility Screen
- June 17 – Submit draft application
- July 8 – Foundation staff will provide application feedback
- July 15 – Submit final application

If you do not want to receive feedback (or miss the deadlines above):

- July 8 – Submit Eligibility Screen
- July 15 – Submit application

Additional important dates:

- September 18 – Award notifications issued; Grant funding period begins
- September 18, 2026 – September 18, 2027 – Duration of grant funding period
- October 18, 2027 – Grant impact report due

Application Questions

- **Organizational Challenge** – Describe a challenge(s) your organization is currently facing regarding JEDI practices (justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion)? How and when were the challenges identified? (2,000 characters)
- **Plan** – Describe how you plan to address these challenges, including project timeline, key milestones, and who will be responsible for each phase. You may present this as a bulleted list or narrative. (2,000 characters)

- **Spending** – Instead of asking for a budget, we want to get a general sense of how you'd use the grant funds. Provide a short description of the kinds of things you would spend the requested grant funds on. (2,000 characters)
- **Goals & Achievements -** What are your project goals? How will you evaluate your results and/or achievements? Be as specific as possible. (2,000 characters)
- **Potential Barriers** – What barriers or challenges might your organization face in implementing this work? (2,000 characters)
- **Access & Opportunity** – Beyond having an anti-discrimination policy, how does your organization ensure its programming, services, and/or opportunities are equitable and accessible to all Lancaster County residents? (2,000 characters)
- **Additional Comments (Optional)** – What else would you like us to know about your project? (1,000 characters)

Evaluation Criteria

Community grant reviewers will use the following questions to evaluate and score applications:

- **Organizational Challenge** – To what extent does the applicant clearly describe the organization's challenge(s) related to JEDI (justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion)?
- **Plan** – To what extent does the response outline an effective plan and timeline for project implementation?
- **Spending** – To what extent does the response outline a reasonable and achievable budget for project implementation?
- **Goals & Achievements** - To what extent does the response outline and evaluate attainable and impactful goals?
- **Access & Opportunity** – To what extent does the application show the organization's commitment to ensuring services are equitable and accessible to all Lancaster County residents?

Community Foundation Staff Contact

Fran Rodriguez
Senior Program Officer
frodriguez@lancfound.org
(717) 397-1629, Ext. 115