

THE GULF COAST FUND
FOR COMMUNITY RENEWAL AND ECOLOGICAL HEALTH
SAMPLE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Spring Grant Cycle
Applications due March 1
Decisions announced May 15

About the Gulf Coast Fund For Community Renewal and Ecological Health

The Gulf Coast Fund for Community Renewal and Ecological Health (the “Fund”) is a collaborative community-led grant making institution supporting local, state and regional efforts that engage, empower and benefit Gulf Coast communities, and that promote the sustainable and just recovery of neighborhoods, cities and ecosystems throughout the Gulf Coast. The Fund approaches all of its activities through the lens of supporting progressive movement building in the Gulf Coast region.

Since its inception in the weeks after Hurricane Katrina, the Fund has been led by Gulf Coast communities most affected by the legacy of social, environmental and economic injustices brought on by decades of disenfranchisement. The Fund operates in partnership with an Advisory Group consisting of a cross-section of community leaders working on the ground across the Gulf Coast and is committed to an open and transparent decision-making process. This Advisory Group informs all grant making and identifies needs on an ongoing basis. Grant recommendations are made by a panel of members of the Advisory Group through a Panel Process. The Gulf Coast Fund is a special project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors and grant decisions must be approved by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors before being considered final.

Purpose of the Fund

- Collaborative grant making fund dedicated to supporting community-led local, state and regional efforts which will engage, empower and benefit Gulf Coast communities and promote the sustainable and just rebuilding of neighborhoods, cities and ecosystems throughout the region.
- To support projects that help to lift up and strengthen local organizing, address justice concerns, and build movement.
- To operate in partnership with a cross-section of local and state community leaders from the Gulf Coast (Advisory Group) who will inform grant making and identify needs on an ongoing basis.

Priority Areas of Funding

The Fund supports projects that strengthen and amplify local organizing, social justice concerns and movement building, and that address the underlying causes that have contributed to the severity of recent disasters—be they natural or human-made—in the Gulf Coast. The Fund focuses on communities that have been historically disenfranchised due to race, class, gender, nationality and/or immigration status. The majority of Fund grantees are organizations led by people of color and/or historically disenfranchised constituencies that reflect and are grounded in the communities in which they work. Further, the Fund seeks to support the building of community-level regional power that can inform and affect local, regional and national policy.

The Fund considers only those proposals that are developed by or in collaboration with Gulf Coast communities around self-determined needs, and that demonstrate how they will address one or more of the following issues:

- *Right of Return and Right to Whole Communities:* Facilitate, promote and create space for residents to move back to areas affected by hurricanes and other natural or human-made disasters; support efforts to retain and rebuild communities region-wide—e.g. rehabilitation and rebuilding of housing, restoring/creating effective storm protection, fair elections, restoring of cultural institutions, public schools, public transportation, jobs, mental health services, public health and health care.
- *Ecological Health:* Restore and support coastal wetlands and healthy coastal ecosystems.
- *Environmental Justice and Health:* Monitor and clean up health and environmental hazards such as landfills; work toward the equitable cleanup of historically and newly contaminated areas; hold polluters accountable for environmental contamination and risks to human health; measure and track environmental contaminants and health impacts; promote innovative solutions such as green chemistry; and protect right-to-know laws.
- *Just and Sustainable Recovery:* In the wake of natural and human-made disasters, incorporate sustainable solutions such as green and healthy buildings and smart and fair growth, protecting the right to safe and healthy communities; promote clean energy and reduce fossil fuel use and production in the Gulf Coast; monitor where private and public sector monies are going and ensure that funds are being effectively drawn down and utilized.
- *Worker and Immigrant Rights:* Protect all workers' health and safety, protect low-wage workers and fight contractor abuses such as hazardous exposure, non-payment of wages and immigration status-related threats; promote analysis, advocacy and organizing which empowers African American, minority, and immigrant workers.
- *Cultural Arts:* Support community-based arts initiatives that promote the well-being of communities and preserve the cultural heritage of the Gulf Coast, with particular emphasis on the traditions of the African American, indigenous and minority communities.
- *Youth and Education:* Recognize and address the needs of children and youth in coastal communities; promote just and equitable access to quality education for all school-age children in returning communities and in internally-displaced families.

Projects may use any number of strategies, including but not limited to community education, grassroots organizing, advocacy, policy development, media work, litigation and public interest education. Special attention is given to projects that address one or more of the following:

- Mental Wellness – in a manner that is culturally-sensitive, innovative, and collaborative
- Resilience & Revitalization – helping the most vulnerable people and ecosystems recover
- Equity & Movement Building
- Amplifying New Voices
- Influencing Public Policy & Working with Governments
- Shared Learning
- Collective Advocacy and Education

- Networking & Collaboration
- Leadership Development
- Right to Self Determination
- Sustainable Human and Community-Based Development
- Accountability
- Empowerment of Women
- Civic Engagement

Geographic Restrictions

The Fund focuses on the rebuilding and revitalization of hurricane-impacted areas in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Texas. Starting in 2010, the Fund will include coastal regions of Florida. Priority is given to areas where community organizations have been advocating for environmental justice and working to stop the injustices of both unsustainable development and systemic racism that harm the health and lives of residents; and areas where local organizations have been working to protect coastal lands. The recovery and rebuilding of these areas in a just and sustainable manner is the initial priority for the Fund.

Eligibility

Any organization that has 501(C)(3) or 501(C)(4) tax status, or has a fiscal sponsor with 501(C)(3) status, is eligible to apply for funding.

Organizations may submit only **one** application per funding cycle.

Organizations may receive only one grant from the Fund per calendar year. Exceptions may be made for special circumstances, as deemed by the Fund's Advisory Group (for example, emergency circumstances or in the case of a sovereign or remote location where one entity is solely responsible for addressing multiple issues and needs in a given area.)

NOTE: Organizations that have recently received an emergency grant are still eligible to apply in this grant cycle.

Organizations who have already received two or more grants from the Gulf Coast Fund will be asked to submit additional application materials and will be contacted during the application process.

Budget Requirements

Preference is given to applicants with a budget under \$250,000 although organizations that fall outside of this range may apply.

Grant Size and Duration

One year grant requests in the \$5,000-\$40,000 range will be considered. Most grants will be \$15,000 or less due to the size of the Fund. Smaller grants may also be considered if requested.

Application and Decision Deadlines

The next application deadline is March 1st. Decisions will be announced in May 15th.

Grant Criteria

The following questions will be used in the review of your application:

- ✓ Does this project help to build community power? How does it further human rights, induce social and environmental justice and/or increase equity in a community?
- ✓ Does this project support the collaboration or networking of constituencies?
- ✓ Will this grant leverage greater resources or fill a need that won't be met otherwise?
- ✓ Does the project expand advocacy for an under-recognized issue or unmet need?
- ✓ Does this project promote diverse constituencies coming together around an important cross-cutting issue?
- ✓ Are there any aspects of this project that might be replicable in other communities?

Grant applications that were successful in the past demonstrated the following:

- ✓ It is clear that the project or organization will create social change and further human rights and/or ecological justice.
- ✓ There is a clear statement of the problem/need to be addressed and the applicant shows why this problem is significant to the ecological health, community renewal and/or self determination of the affected community.
- ✓ The project described clearly falls into the Fund's Priority Areas of Funding (see page one of this document for "Priority Areas of Funding").
- ✓ The goals of the project are clearly stated and relate directly to the community challenges identified by the applicant.
- ✓ Project leadership and staff reflect significant participation from affected communities.
- ✓ There is enough planning detail provided to indicate a well thought-out work plan including a timeline, communication goals, and evaluation steps.
- ✓ Accountability to the community has been built in and the applicant indicates how the project will garner community feedback.
- ✓ The applicant provides a realistic budget that makes sense and the numbers add up correctly.

Application Instructions

Applications Must Include:

1. A two-page proposal answering the questions below. (Proposals over two pages are fine.)
2. Two (2) testimonials or letters of recommendation from constituents or people who are **directly** affected by the program.
3. Organizations that have previously received **two or more** grants from the Gulf Coast Fund: Please complete the section below: **Additional Application Questions for Multiple Grant Recipients**
4. If you are not applying online, you must include a Proposal Summary Sheet, signed by an authorized representative of your organization (use attached "Summary Sheet").
5. Current organization budget (i.e. total annual cost to operate the entire organization) and most recent organization financial statement (if available, this can be an income statement, statement of cash flow, balance sheet, etc.).
6. Project budget. (Please breakdown the costs of the specific project for which you are requesting support, including how you plan to spend the amount requested.)
7. List of board members and their affiliations, and short bio(s) of key project staff or volunteers (if applicable).
8. An organizational newsletter or press clippings (if applicable, **no more than 2-3 pages please**).
9. Copy of 501(c)(3) or (c)(4) IRS letter if you are a nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) or (c)(4) status. If your organization does not have 501(c)(3) status, you may still be eligible. You can ask another organization with 501(c)(3) status to serve as a "fiscal sponsor" for your project. Please include a letter from the organization that confirms it will act as a fiscal sponsor for your project, plus a copy of the fiscal sponsor's 501(c)(3) IRS letter.

If you have questions or require assistance with your application please call 123-456-7890 or email questions@organization.org

Questions to Address in Your Proposal (in 2 pages or more):

1. Describe your organization's vision, mission and recent accomplishments.
2. What are the core principles and values that drive your work?
3. What are the specific issues that your organization will address over the next year?
4. What are the project's goals and objectives?
5. Who from your organization will work on this project? Are they paid or volunteer?
6. What is the timeline to complete this project?
7. How will you define success for your project?
8. If you have an alternative organizational structure, please describe it and your decision-making process.
9. If your organizational budget is over \$250,000 please explain briefly how the Fund's grant would have an impact on this project.

Submitting Materials:

Online: Applicants are encouraged to apply online at: www.website.org
Otherwise please email your application to: grants@organization.org

Mail/Fax: If you need to fax or mail additional materials, please email grants@organization.org or call 123-456-7890 for instructions.

PROPOSALS MUST BE RECEIVED BY March 1 at 5:00 pm CST.

Gulf Coast Fund for Community Renewal and Ecological Health
SUMMARY SHEET
(Complete and attach to Proposal)

Organization Name:

Project Name (if applicable):

Address:

Contact Person:*

Title:

**All correspondence for this grant will be sent to this person.*

Phone:

Alternate Phone:

Fax:

E-mail:

Web site (if any):

Amount Requested:

Project Budget (Total cost of this project): _____

Annual Organization Budget (Total cost to operate your entire organization):

Years in Operation: _____

Organization's Fiscal Year:

Tax Status: ___ 501(c)(3) ___ 501(c)(4) ___ Tax-status pending ___ Fiscal Sponsor

Tax ID Number (for your organization or fiscal sponsor):

If you have a *fiscal sponsor*, please provide the Organization's Name, Address, Contact Person, Email and Phone number:

Setting: ___ Rural ___ Urban ___ Both

Scope of Work: ___ National ___ Regional ___ Statewide ___ Local

Summary of Proposed Project (Please complete in this space only, 100 words or less):

Name and Title of Authorized Representative:

_____ Title:

Signature:

_____ Date:

Additional Application Questions for Multiple Grant Recipients*
*(*Organizations that have previously received two or more grants,
excluding Emergency Grants)*

Please include your responses below with your other application materials. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Recognizing that the Gulf Coast Fund supports organizations that have often been overlooked by other sources of funding, we do not have a limit on the number of grants an organization can receive (beyond the pre-existing policy of one grant per organization per calendar year). However, any organization that is requesting a third grant or higher from the Gulf Coast Fund must provide answers to the following questions:

1. What other sources of funding have you secured for your organization in the coming year?
2. Information on unsuccessful proposals:

We understand that it may be difficult for your organization to secure foundation grants, especially in this economic climate. But we would like to know about the efforts you have made in this area. Have you submitted grant proposals that were NOT successful? If so, where have you applied? Did they provide feedback/reasons for not being able to fund your work at this time? If so, please share any of the pertinent details (for example, don't fund in your geographic area, don't fund community organizing, felt your budget was too small, etc.).

3. Please share some of your current development plan, including:

- what sources of funding are you targeting: foundations, individuals, others;
- target amounts from each type of source;
- how will you reach out to them: appeal letters, fundraising events, etc.

4. We may request that your organization seek out technical assistance in organizational development and/or fundraising as a stipulation in future grants, understanding that a portion of GCF grant funds may be needed to cover the cost. Is this something your organization would be willing and able to do if asked?

5. For multiple grant recipients, GCF staff or Advisory Group members may request an interview or site visit during the application process. Is this something you would be comfortable with?