

Letter from the President of the Gordon Elwood Foundation:

Dear Community Partners,

As many of you may know we have been undertaking an in-depth “*refounding*” process at the foundation since January 2018. A piece of that process relates to our grant making and the processes and details of that program.

Our eight-member committee of community volunteers initiated two ways to collect feedback from previous grantees. Two hundred individual names or organizations were invited to participate in an online survey, and we had a great response rate! Additionally, a focus group of individuals representing seven organizations in our service area offered their insights and perspectives to the committee. Both information gathering opportunities provided excellent input on our current system and offered meaningful suggestions for us and for foundations in general. We will share the general feedback with our philanthropic colleagues around the region and state later this year.

Here are some of the changes we are making as a result of your input and the committee’s recommendations to the board of trustees:

- **New Application Deadline Dates: September 15th and March 15th** (or the next business day if those dates fall on a weekend.)
- **Planning Document Option:** The applicant organization’s existing program planning document can be submitted as an attachment or the applicant can complete and submit a Program Logic Model if the organization doesn’t have an in-house planning document.
- **Two Online Application Versions:** Separate application forms for Continuing Applicants and New Applicants will reduce application time for continuing applicants. (*The foundation has invested in a new database grant management system called Foundant to allow more flexibility on both sides.*)
- **Clarification on the Website:** The size of the foundation will be stated so it is clear that the foundation’s capacity to fund requests is different than those of the larger statewide philanthropies.
- **Simplified Final Report:** The Final Report will no longer require the planning document or Logic Model Program Plan.

Your feedback encouraged us to continue the following processes:

- Continue site visits by foundation leadership to applicant organizations and/or hour-long interviews in our office will continue to offer an opportunity for additional understanding of the organization and provide context for the application.
- The Interim Report will continue as a helpful way for applicants to stay connected with the foundation, and it allows communication to shift the deliverables if needed. (*We are also creating a specific report for technical assistance and capital awards.*)
- Continue using an online application, which is really helpful versus paper submissions.

- Continue sending notes of receipt of application.
- Continue sending decline or award letters that invite organizations to call our office for more information.
- Continue calling the applicant and asking questions if financials do not make sense rather than overlooking the application because it is incomplete.
- Continue requiring a Final funding report. *(While most respondents don't look forward to completing funding reports because of the time required, they understand the necessity. Your feedback told us that you often find the reports beneficial as a way to look back on the data and see the project from a new perspective.)*
- Continue the requirement for contacting foundation staff before beginning the application process. *(This was of value to all except one or two survey respondents. It offers the foundation another opportunity to build relationships and connect regional partnerships, and to provide grant worthiness information, fundraising tips, and other resources.)*

Some of the general information we were asked to share with our philanthropic partners included:

- Multi-year grants would allow for better planning.
- Overfunding a program is never an issue for most small organizations in southern Oregon.
- Teaching philanthropy to youth is critical; maybe the OCF Community 101 could be expanded beyond schools to community programs that are involved with youth.
- Capital campaigns can be difficult because they often lose momentum. The puzzle of fitting funders together can be chaotic and contribute to loss of momentum. Some funders like to come in first and some like to wait until the end to see where things stand.
- A lot of funders have the same grant application deadlines causing applicants to pick and choose between funders. Because of time constraints, applicants are more likely to go with the applications and funders they have been successful with in the past which means they may miss out on a new funding opportunity.
- Site visits with more than one foundation representative offer a wider lens to inform decision-making on a proposal. More than one person's perspective upon hearing the applicant's storytelling increases the foundation's understanding of the community context for the request.

Again, thank you for your input and the time you gave to share your perspectives and ideas with us. The changes recommended to the foundation board by the Ad Hoc Grants Committee were approved May 22nd. The staff is now working to set up the new grant application database for the Fall 2018 submission deadline.

PLEASE be patient with us. We hope to have our new system online AUGUST 1 for the SEPTEMBER 17th DEADLINE.

We respect the time it takes to write a proposal and for that reason we continue to request that each organization interested in applying for funding contact Kathy Bryon, executive director, before filling out the online application.

Please contact Kathy during the months of June, August and September for the **September 17, 2018 deadline. The application closes at 11:59 pm.** (Note: Kathy will be away from the area for the month of July.)

The Foundation's Grants Committee will only review grant applications from non-profits that have reviewed their grant proposal idea with Kathy and submitted the online application **by September 17th at 11:59 pm.**

Grant applications received September 17 2018 from organizations who have not been invited to apply for funding cannot be considered.

Approximately 25 proposals will be invited to apply in September. The grant review process will be completed by December 11, 2018 and checks will be distributed in late December or early January.

For more information, or to discuss a grant proposal, please call Kathy at 541-282-0643 before June 30th or after August 1.

Very Sincerely Yours,

Julia Beattie
President, Board of Directors
Gordon Elwood Foundation