

2026 Centra Community Grant & Sponsorships

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

General Questions

What is the difference between a grant and a sponsorship?

The sponsorship process generally funds one-time events and activities in the community (i.e. 5K's, fundraisers, meetings/conferences, etc.). The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) defines a [sponsorship](#) as one in which the organization making the sponsorship payment does not receive any substantial return other than the use of the organization's name or logo in connection with the activities of the organization that receives the funds (marketing or branding opportunity).

Grants fund ongoing programs that will impact and improve one or more community health outcome. Grants are cash contributions made by Centra to non-profit organizations whose activities and services must result in a specific benefit to the community and include measurable outcomes to demonstrate their impact on the community. These community benefit activities are restricted to one or more of the types as defined by the [IRS Schedule H990](#).

Where do we apply for Grant Funding and stay informed about grants?

Please visit [Centra Health Grants](#) for more information about the grants process.

Where do we apply for Sponsorship Funding and stay informed about sponsorships?

Please visit [Centra Health Sponsorships](#) for more information about the sponsorships process.

Can I apply for both a grant and sponsorship?

Yes, you may apply for both grants and sponsorships that are applicable to your organization's needs and activities.

Can I apply for multiple sponsorships or grants in the same cycle?

If you have multiple events, you may submit more than one sponsorship request. There are now two sponsorship cycles each year. For grants, you may also submit more than one application, but each request must demonstrate a distinct program need. There is one grant cycle per year.

How much is a typical award amount?

There is no minimum or maximum amount you may request for grants or sponsorships. Awards are based on available resources and an objective review process. We encourage you to request an amount that is realistic for your program and responsive to community needs. Annual grant and sponsorship budget allocations vary from year to year.

Do I need a recommendation letter of support for a sponsorship and/or grant application?

You do not need a letter of support for a grant application but currently we require a letter for sponsorships.

I don't have a non-profit, but I am still doing charity work. Can I apply?

No, per IRS guidelines, Centra cannot fund organizations or groups that are not 501(c)(3) or have other tax-exempt status.

If our organization is not yet a 501c3, but we have a 501c3 fiscal sponsor, are we eligible to apply (or have our fiscal sponsor apply on our behalf)?

Yes, but the fiscal sponsor must apply on your behalf.

Do I need to register with Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)?

Yes. VDACS registration is a mandatory requirement for fundraising in Virginia.

Important 2026 Note: VDACS registration processing is currently experiencing delays. Uploading a screenshot showing your organization's active VDACS registration or extension on the VDACS website is sufficient for inclusion with Centra's grant and sponsorship applications.

Where can I find the initial request to register with VDACS?

Fill out Form 102 at <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/oca102registrationstatement.pdf>.

Do I need to prove that I am exempt?

Yes, an exemption letter must come from VDACS ([VDACS Exemption Letter](#)).

Where can I find further detailed information on VDACS guidelines?

The Virginia Solicitation of Contributions Law (VSOC) requires charitable organizations, except as otherwise provided for in the VSOC, which intends to solicit contributions within the Commonwealth of Virginia or have funds solicited on its behalf, is required to file an initial registration statement with the Office of Charitable and Regulatory Programs (OCR) prior to any solicitation. Please refer to www.vdacs.virginia.gov/food-charitable-solicitation and § 57-49.

Grants-Specific Questions

What are the funding priorities for Grants?

Grant requests must address the top 5 prioritized needs identified in the 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment. (<https://www.centrahealth.com/community-resources/community-health#chna>)

Will you fund a non-federal match required by a federal grant?

Yes, we will consider funding a match if you can verify that you have received the federal grant.

How long do we have to spend down grant funds?

During the funding program period which is from October 1 to September 30.

Will Centra fund general operating expenses of programs with grants?

We consider supporting a portion of general operating expenses related to your program. Please be sure to show other sources of funding for your program.

Are indirect costs considered allowable or disallowable in the Community Grant proposal?

Indirect costs are not allowed.

How will I know if my grant application has been awarded?

You will receive an automated email with an update by September 30. The notice of funding will be sent to the organization's Executive Director/CEO by email. The grant writer or other point of contact for the organization will be notified via the grant application portal and must log in to receive the notification.

I didn't get my application submitted in time; is there a grace period?

No, we cannot accept applications submitted after the due date. Please be sure to start your application early and contact us with any issues to ensure a timely submission. If you do not submit your application on time, you may submit it in the following cycle.

Is it possible to access or review previous grant applications that have been funded in the past?

No, we do not make these applications public. If you want to view a successful application, please contact an organization directly if you are aware that they have received Centra funds in the past. You can also contact us, and we can refer you to an organization.

As a reminder, please download a copy of your application once it is completed in the portal for future reference.

My organization is a small non-profit and cannot afford a financial audit; can I still apply for a grant?

A third-party financial audit or financial review is a basic nonprofit accountability standard and is expected for those requesting funding through Centra's grants process. We recognize that an audit can be a financial burden on smaller nonprofits; however, a financial review can be performed at a fraction of the cost of an audit. For more information regarding independent audits versus an independent financial review, please go to <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/nonprofit-audit-guide/need-independent-audit>.

What is a General Program request?

A general program request is awarded to an organization to carry out a specific program, project, or initiative. These funds are restricted and are tied to outcomes and success measures that are defined in the application. Based on the program needs, Centra will not pay for indirect costs or

promotional/marketing materials. Centra will not supplant existing funding for staff or other expenses. We will fund salaries associated with the program you are applying for if the request is again not supplanting funds and/or is ongoing support from Centra.

What is a Capital Program request?

A capital program request is awarded specifically for the purchase, construction, renovation, or improvement of long-term physical assets, such as buildings, facilities, major equipment, and vehicles. These funds are restricted to capital projects and cannot be used for operating expenses like staffing or program delivery.

Do Fire/EMS or Community Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) qualify for capital grant requests?

Yes — if you are a nonprofit and serve localities in the Centra service areas.

Is there a funding range that is considered acceptable?

The budget should reflect the entire Program budget for the proposal, not just how Centra funding will be used. We ask that Centra funding is on average no more than 25% of the total Program budget. If it is greater, please provide an explanation as to why.

How does grant reporting work for last year's grant, and how will it work for future grants?

Since grant dollars are restricted, we require that you submit an Impact Report to Centra every year based on the outcomes and success measures that you address in your grant application. If the program has not been completed after the first year, we ask that you submit an Impact Report with updates on your program each year until it is complete. Impact Reports must be submitted annually between October 1 and October 31.

What is the anticipated reduction in number of applications funded and/or funds allocated in awards?

The number of applications funded varies each cycle, as does the annual funding available for grants and sponsorships. Budget decisions can shift year to year.

If you apply with another non-profit, can you cut two checks or does one have to receive all the funding?

There can only be one fiscal agent per application, and they are responsible for distributing funding to collaborative partners as described in your grant application.

How do you define collaboration?

Collaboration, especially when two programs are addressing the same community need, helps you combine resources, avoid duplication, and create a more coordinated and impactful experience for the individuals and families that are served. By aligning your efforts, each organization can expand reach, share resources, and better support the Centra community as a whole. Given these uncertain times,

demonstrations of collaboration to ensure that you are NOT duplicating efforts and are maximizing resources is a key point. A collaboration is not just a referral network.

When doing a grant, since the “Entire Service Area” has been removed, can we still use two areas such as Bedford and Lynchburg for our application focus?

You can only select one region. However, if it crosses into other service areas (i.e., from Lynchburg Area to Bedford; Farmville Area to Appomattox County) please provide information about this in the Program Need section of the grant application.

In a grant application, is there a baseline number for the number of total individuals served by the organization?

No, there is no baseline on the total individuals served, but applicants should be realistic on the number they serve. You should address the need of your target population and present a program and budget that is reasonable to meet these needs.

Do you still allow grant requests from a religious organization if the funding itself is not for a religious purpose?

Yes, you need to be clear in your application what the dollars are being used for and how you will measure outcomes based on the population served.

Is there a list of what questions are worth which numbers of points?

Each grant application is reviewed and scored by our Community Benefit Committee members. A score card is used which aligns directly with the Program Narrative section questions asked in the application. Each section is worth 25 points for a total of 100 points. The points for each narrative section are now included in the grant application for your guidance.

Sponsorship-Specific Questions

Are there any advantages or disadvantages in applying for Cycle 1 vs. Cycle 2?

We recognize that changing the sponsorship cycles to two cycles in 2026 may impact your planning for your event. You need to apply in a timely manner so that you receive your funding prior to the event. If you have further questions, please reach out to centragrantsandsponsorships@centrahealth.com.

If we have three events that Centra normally sponsors, but there are now only two cycles, can we submit a request for 2 events in one cycle?

Yes — this applies as long as the two events are separate and their event dates have not already occurred.

Application Portal Questions

Will any of the slides be shared with the attendees?

The training PowerPoint is available on the main page of the application portal. Please visit <https://centrahealth.smapply.io/>.

I can't log into the application portal; what do I do?

Please contact us to resolve the issue at centragrantsandsponsorships@centrahealth.com.

I can't get the application portal to work; can I email or mail in my application?

We cannot accept applications that are not submitted through the portal. If you have any questions, please contact us at centragrantsandsponsorships@centrahealth.com.