



## 2026 Open Door Grants Information & Application Guidelines

- TIMELINE** Applications accepted April 15, 2026-May 14, 2026  
Information Sessions: April 16 and April 28 (Optional)  
Decisions and award notifications will be completed by the beginning of June, and grant funds will be distributed no later than mid-June.
- ELIGIBILITY** Grants are for nonprofit organizations serving Barnstable County that are NEW to the Foundation or that have not received a discretionary grant in the last five years.
- REQUESTS** Organizations must have an annual operating budget of at least \$25,000. Grant awards will equal 20% of the organization's operating budget, up to a maximum award amount of \$10,000.
- APPLY** All applications will be submitted through The Cape Cod Foundation's online [grant management system](#). Please [click here](#) to learn more about using our system prior to completing an application.

### INTRODUCTION

The Cape Cod Foundation was established in 1989 to improve community life on Cape Cod through philanthropy and grantmaking.

Since inception, the Foundation has distributed more than \$113 million in grants and scholarships throughout the community. Our grantmaking process promotes the advancement and sustainability of our community's resources and supports the organizations that make a true impact on our community.

One way we accomplish this mission is by developing permanent and flexible endowment funds. We use these funds to create grant opportunities (sometimes called "discretionary grants") to respond to the existing and emerging needs of the community. Each year's grant offerings are based on these needs and the availability of funds, which can vary in any given year.

All applicants should note that it is never our intent to use discretionary funds as a continuous source of annual revenue for any one program or organization. Grantees should not rely on receiving another grant in subsequent years.

The Cape Cod Foundation's grant programs are highly competitive. For 2026, we continue our focus on engaging with and strengthening nonprofits.

## 2026 OPEN DOOR GRANTS

The Cape Cod Foundation's grant programs are highly competitive; our goal is to strengthen nonprofits and build organizational capacity. The Open Door Grants were created to ensure we remain accessible to organizations with smaller needs and to introduce us to newer or less-funded groups that enrich our community. These organizations may later become eligible for larger or multi-year grants.

Organizations must have an annual operating budget **of at least \$25,000**. Grant awards will equal 20% of the organization's operating budget, up to a maximum **award amount of \$10,000**.

Open Door Grants are reserved for organizations in or serving Barnstable County, Massachusetts that:

- Have been in operation for at least one full year.
- Have a budget size greater than \$25,000
- Are first-time applicants to The Cape Cod Foundation OR have not received one of the following discretionary grants in the last five years (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025): Program Grant, Open Door Grant, Capacity Building Grant (Targeted or competitive), Anniversary Grant, or Flexible Funding.

In addition to the above, all applicants must fit into one of the following categories:

- 501(c)(3) public charities as of date of submitting application.
- Organizations serving a charitable purpose that have a fiscal sponsor that is a 501(c)(3) public charity.
- Faith-based organizations. We will consider proposals from criteria-meeting, faith-based organizations if: (1) services benefit all, regardless of religion; (2) services provided are not religious in nature; and (3) there is no proselytizing associated with the service.
- Civic organizations. Proposals must be project-based and of a charitable nature; the organization must have a fiscal sponsor that is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Organizations can request funding for a specific project or for General Operating Support.

Applicants with a fiscal sponsor are welcome to apply. Please note that The Cape Cod Foundation will not serve as a fiscal sponsor for any Foundation grant requests.

Regional or national organizations are welcome to apply but must show a clear impact on Cape Cod and be able to demonstrate that grant funding will serve and benefit Barnstable County.

## LIMITATIONS

These grants are for either Program or General Operating Support (GOS) with the expectation that funds can be expended within one year. Though GOS offers few restrictions, please note that The Cape Cod Foundation does not intend to fund the following types of work. If your use of funding fits mostly into one of these categories, the Open Door Grant is not the right fit.

- Debt reduction
- Past costs for work completed substantially prior to the time of the grant award
- Capital campaigns or capital reserves
- Fundraisers or event sponsorships
- Endowment/Reserve-building
- Monuments and memorials

Public schools, private K-12 and post-secondary schools, and governmental organizations are not eligible for Open Door Grants.

Organizations may receive only one Open Door grant in 2026. However, receiving an Open Door Grant does not preclude organizations from applying for other 2026 discretionary grant programs, depending on specific eligibility requirements of each. All grant opportunities are listed on the website.

## EVALUATION

The Cape Cod Foundation's staff initially screens applications for eligibility and completeness, following our Board-approved due-diligence policy. Most grants are then evaluated by an appropriate committee, comprised of Foundation staff and sometimes supplemented by community or Board members. The Foundation seeks guidance from content experts, as necessary. All grant recommendations are reviewed by The Cape Cod Foundation's Board of Directors for final approval. Grants will be evaluated based on the following:

- Clear understanding of the applicant's mission, goals, and impact
- Community need
- Organizational health: capacity of the organization, staff, and volunteer leadership
- Financial health: a diverse and balanced funding plan appropriate to the organization size/scope
- Connection to The Cape Cod Foundation's programmatic priorities
- Organization's ability to leverage other resources if indicated
- Involvement of collaboration and cross-sector partnerships

## REPORTING

It is our intent to minimize the work organizations must complete for this Open Door Grant opportunity. Grantees will be asked to complete a brief, written report no later than July 2027. An email reminder will be sent ahead of the due date if no report has been filed.

All grantees can request an optional conversation with The Cape Cod Foundation at any time during or after their grant period and/or we may check in informally during the year.

From time to time, we may request additional, optional feedback to learn more about needs and opportunities on Cape Cod, as well as the impact of the grant on your organization.

## APPLICATION

[Submit your application](#) through the Foundation's online grant management system. Remember that you can save and come back to your application as a draft, before hitting submit.

You can find specific instructions for establishing an account [HERE](#).

You can find general application tips [HERE](#).

If you have not previously used this system, please [watch this tutorial](#) video in advance. If you have previously used our grant management system, you do not need to create a new profile or organization.

Detailed information on the application process and grant portal is available in the [Resources for Applicants](#) section of the website, and in the [FAQs](#).

## **PUBLICITY**

As part of our responsibility to be transparent funders, we announce a summary of our grantees, including 2026 Open Door Grantees and their corresponding grant amounts.

Typically, we derive the organization name from the application. If any changes to what is provided in the grant application occur post-award, or if you have questions about how we will use your organization name on the website, please contact the Foundation as soon as possible.

From time to time, the Foundation also highlights grantee profiles in our newsletter. The Foundation will contact a grantee in advance to request permission to do so and confirm content prior to any publicity of this nature.

## **GETTING IN TOUCH WITH US**

For information about this grant opportunity, visit the “Nonprofits” page of the website. From there, you can review FAQs, see other grant opportunities, view past grantees, and sign up for optional e-information sessions.

Keep an eye on your email. Emails may be delivered through the Foundation’s online grant management system via the email address [administrator@grantinterface.com](mailto:administrator@grantinterface.com). We recommend that you add this email to your contact list to prevent messages from being delivered to your spam folder.

For help logging into the portal or accessing your account, review the FAQs and tutorial, and then if you still have questions, contact [info@capecodfoundation.org](mailto:info@capecodfoundation.org), 508-790-3040.

If you have reviewed the materials and continue to have questions, you can email Lauren Dreyer at the email below or schedule a brief conversation [here](#). Having/not having a meeting does not affect grant decisions.

All other inquiries, contact Lauren Dreyer, Program Officer [ldreyer@capecodfoundation.org](mailto:ldreyer@capecodfoundation.org),

**Thank you in advance for your partnership.**