How to Apply for Funding:
A Guide for Nonprofit or Public Sector Organizations

We welcome bold applications that seek to solve complex challenges with fresh thinking and a strong knowledge of what's worked and what hasn't. The questions that we ask in our application will help you to describe:

- **what** your bold idea is.
- **why** you think your idea will create positive change.

This guide will help you to prepare an application for submission through our General Application or a Request for Proposal. We also strongly encourage you to login to our portal and explore.

The guide has the following contents:

- 01: Funding Policies and Guidelines
- 02: Application Overview
- 03: Section Details
- 04: Technical Assistance for the Online Application

If you have questions that have not been answered by reading this guide, our FAQs, or the Funding pages on our website, please email the Foundation at rkmf@rkmf.org or call 412-392-2800.

01 - Funding Policies & Guidelines

- The Foundation only accepts applications submitted via our online application portal.
- We accept applications via our General Application on a rolling basis. RFP applications must be submitted in accordance with the guidance provided in each RFP.
- Your organization must have a valid U.S. IRS Tax ID to apply through our online portal.
- We do not consider applications on behalf of individuals or from outside the United States.
- The Foundation does not fund advocacy or political causes or events.
- Submission of an application in no way implies a commitment of funding from the Foundation nor a specific timeline for consideration. The Foundation staff member assigned to an application will determine funding consideration and timeline.

02 - Application Overview

In this part of the guide, we describe the four sections of our application and how we use the information that you provide. Each section of the application is complementary, purposeful, and required.

Throughout our application, we require organizations to use our certain templates that we provide to create consistency and fairness in reviewing applications. We also have word count limits to encourage applicants to be as clear and concise as possible.

Organization Information

In this section, you introduce your organization. You share your organization's purpose and strengths, and you tell us more about how we can connect with you to learn more.

We use this section to verify your eligibility to receive a grant and your compliance with Pennsylvania regulations regarding nonprofit governance. We also consider how your proposal aligns with your mission, builds from your past successes, and complements your current activities.

Project Information

In this section, you create a logic model to describe what you propose to do and why you think your project is likely to create positive change. If you are applying for general operating support, the project effectively is your organization.

We use this section to understand the essential elements of your project and organization. We consider your organization's ability to implement the proposed activities. We also evaluate the degree to which your proposal aligns with our 2021-2030 strategy and whether your project would complement other efforts that we previously funded or are considering for future funding.

Project Budget

In this section, you describe the total cost of the project and, of that total cost, how much money you are requesting from us.

We use this information to understand whether there is broad support from community stakeholders and assess the degree to which the project's short and long-term success is reliant on our funding. We also use this information to understand more about the project's and your organization's financial sustainability and health.

Executive Certification

In this section, your organization's Board of Directors and executive leadership verify their support for this proposal and that the information provided in the application is true and correct. We use this information to confirm that the organization's leaders fully endorse the application and are prepared to implement the proposed activities if funding is awarded.

03 - Section Details

This part of the guide serves as a resource to help you gather the information you need for your application. You will find detailed information about each section of the application, including:

- A checklist with the application questions, word count limits, and required uploads listed for each section.
- Key terms, definitions, and resources to assist you with the application.

Section: Organization Information

Required questions:
- ❑ Organization address, phone number, and website
- ❑ U.S. Tax ID for a nonprofit or public sector organization
- ❑ Board Chair name, phone number, and email address
- ❑ Executive Director or CEO Name, phone number, and email address
- ❑ Project Contact name, phone number, and email address
- ❑ Organization mission (200 word limit)
- ❑ Organization background or history (200 word limit)
- ❑ Current programs and activities (500 word limit)
- ❑ Major accomplishments (200 word limit)
- ❑ Operating budget
- ❑ Fiscal year end date

Required uploads:
- ❑ Current annual operating budget, plus two years of budget vs. actuals
- ❑ IRS tax determination letter confirming charitable or tax exempt status
- ❑ List of Board of Directors and key staff
- ❑ Most recent audited financials (2 years) or the type of financial statements required by Pennsylvania law based on your gross annual contributions

Key Terms and Topics:

Operating Budget

In the field requesting your operating budget, you should provide the number stating your organization's total estimated operating expenses for your current fiscal year.

In the upload requesting your current annual operating budget plus two years of budget vs. actuals, you should provide a document (typically in Excel or PDF) that describes your total operating expenses and total revenues, itemized by category. For prior years, the document should present how the planned revenue and expenses varied from the actual.

Audited Financial Statements or Alternatives

If you do not have audited financial statements, you may upload the type of financial statements required by Pennsylvania law based on your gross annual contributions.

Do not upload your IRS form 990 as an alternative to financial statements that are compiled, reviewed, or audited.

If you do not have financial statements that are compiled, reviewed, or audited by a third-party, then you may want to work with a fiscal sponsor. The fiscal sponsor would submit an application on your behalf.

EIN Numbers

All businesses (including nonprofits) need an employer identification number (EIN). The EIN is, basically, a Social Security number for your organization. The EIN number is found on the organization's IRS determination letter.

Additional guidance for government or public entities:
If you are a government or public entity, such as a school district or county department, the following will assist you with determining the information to submit in our application:

- List of Board of Directors and Key Staff: - Key administration and project/program staff of the school district or government/public entity
- Executive Director and Board Certification –
  - For school districts - Superintendent of the school district and project/program lead.
  - For Universities/Colleges – Director of Development, VP of Corporate/Foundation Relations, Chacellor for Philanthropic Engagement, etc
  - For government/public entity – Head of agency and project/program lead
  - This form can be Docusigned.
- IRS Tax Determination Letter:
  - For School Districts & Universities/Colleges – On the Letterhead, a paragraph that state's "FILL IN SCHOOL DISTRICT'S NAME HERE is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and does not hold an IRS Determination Letter. As a political subdivision, the District is not subject to federal income tax and contributions to the District made for public purposes are tax-exempt under section 170(c)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code.
  - For government/public entity – A copy of the IRS letter assigning your organization its' EIN number

Section: Project Information

Required questions:
- ❑ Project title (5 word limit)
- ❑ Project description (25 word limit)
- ❑ Executive summary (500 word limit)
- ❑ Funding program with which the proposal best aligns (Conservation, Economic Development, Economic Mobility, Health & Well-Being, or Organizational Effectiveness)
- ❑ Funding purpose (Planning & Innovation, Implementation, or Scalability)
- ❑ Funding type (General operating support; Project support; Capital support; Land Acquisition.
- ❑ Project need (500 word limit)
- ❑ Narrative about logic model inputs/ resources (500 word limit)
- ❑ Narrative about logic model activities/processes (500 word limit)
- ❑ Narrative about logic model outputs (500 word limit)
- ❑ Narrative about logic model outcomes (500 word limit)
- ❑ Narrative about the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning plan (500 word limit)
- ❑ Geographical areas served
- ❑ Target population
- ❑ Project start date
- ❑ Project end date
- ❑ Community engagement and incorporation of community perspectives and partnerships (500 word limit)
- ❑ Risks to project success (250 word limit)
- ❑ Plans for project sustainability (500 word limit)
- ❑ Organization's current year operating budget
- ❑ Description of similar projects and services offered by other organizations to your target population and description of how your project is different (150 words)

Optional questions:
- ❑ Specific towns, cities, school districts, or neighborhoods within the geographical areas served
- ❑ Capital project overview (500 word limit)

Required uploads:
- ❑ Logic model using the Richard King Mellon Foundation's template

Key Terms and Topics:

Funding Purpose describes the developmental phase of the activities in the proposal.
- Planning and Innovation: This funding supports experimentation and the development of new ideas. Recipients might conduct activities such as piloting minimally viable products/services or completing a feasibility study. At the conclusion of a planning and innovation grant, we work with funding recipients to understand the successes, challenges, and future possibilities resulting from the initial funding.

- <u>Implementation</u>: This funding provides support for more developed concepts and services. Recipients might continue current programs, construct a building, train staff, carry out a marketing campaign, or conduct a third-party evaluation. Recipients of this funding often have demonstrated past successes and have capacity to engage in iteration and evaluation.
- <u>Scalability</u>: This funding supports extending the reach of a promising model or project. Recipients might participate in conferences or publishing, convene networks, provide technical support to other organizations, or expand service delivery.

Funding Type describes the degree of flexibility associated with the funding request.
- <u>General Operating Support</u>: refers to funding that is not restricted to any one project.
- <u>Project Support</u>: provides support to a specific project with a predetermined cost. Grant funds are restricted and must be used for the stated project.
- <u>Capital Support:</u> refers to physical assets (buildings, vehicles, technology systems, equipment) which will aid the grantee in serving its clients. For building projects, the Foundation strongly encourages applicants to incorporate LEED, energy star, living building, or other sustainability components, as well as green infrastructure such as bio-swales, rain gardens, and permeable pavement.
- <u>Land Acquisition</u>: refers to funding that is used to purchase land or easements for the purpose of conserving land, as described in the Habitat Conservation investment area in the Conservation program.

Logic models are central to our application. Logic models are visual representations of how an organization does its work and the theory and assumptions underlying a project's design. They define the inputs, outputs, and outcomes to explain the thinking behind project design and show how specific activities will lead to desired results.

What are the benefits of a logic model?

- Using logic models for project planning, implementation, scalability, and evaluation results in effective programming that offers greater learning opportunities and better documentation of outcomes.
- Logic models can also support succinct communications about complex projects and facilitate shared understanding of project goals and methods.

Where can I get help creating a logic model?

In addition to the links provided below, there are many resources that can be found via a quick internet search.

- The W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide
- The Institute for Education Sciences, National Center for Education and Evaluation Logic Model Guide
- The CDC Program Performance and Evaluation Office "Describe the Program" Checklist

How do I incorporate my logic model in your application?

- We provide a single-page PowerPoint logic model template that you will download, complete, and then upload. This single-page logic model template should visually summarize your logic model.
  - You can use this link to preview our logic model template.
  - We also provide additional guidance in our PowerPoint logic model template.
- We request narrative sections about each component of the PowerPoint logic model.
  - Use these narrative sections to provide additional detail about the inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes.
  - Do not copy/ paste the information from the PowerPoint slide into these narrative sections.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plans follow from your application's logic model. A MEL plan is a framework that describe the information that will be collected to inform decision-making and how that information will be used to understand whether activities are effectively meeting outputs and short-term outcomes during the grant period. The MEL plan should answer the following questions:

- How will you measure the success of the proposed project in this application? (How will you measure whether, and how, the project reached the proposed outputs and outcomes)?
- What data sources will you use?
- What is the timeline or milestones you will use to reflect on the findings from the data collected?

Where can I get help creating an MEL plan?

More information about MEL plans can be found in the PowerPoint logic model template we provide.

Community engagement describes how the project will incorporate community perspectives to increase the likelihood of achieving the outputs and outcomes. You might describe how you have engaged with the target population to understand their view of the problem that you propose to address. You might also describe how you will engage your target population in ongoing leadership or advisory roles during the project's implementation. You might also describe partnerships with other organizations that will increase the project's effectiveness.

Project Sustainability helps us to understand your expectations for the relationship that might be formed between our organizations if funding were awarded. By asking this question, we want to understand how you are thinking about our role in your finances and program delivery.

If your primary plan for continuing the work would be to reapply to us for additional funding, please tell us. If you have other funders or revenue streams that might support this effort, we'd like to know that too. If you don't know yet because you're starting something new, that's fine as well – just be clear.

We also recognize that sustainability doesn't necessarily mean your organization continues to lead this work at the end of the grant. You may be seeking to address a short-term need, which would be fulfilled, and the project would end. Or, you may transition the work to another partner, or find alternative methods of providing these services. You may also discover that the project didn't work as planned, and that there are other, better ways to advance your goals.

Section: Project Budget

Required questions:
- ❑ Total project cost/ budget
- ❑ Request amount
- ❑ Project budget narrative (500 word limit)

Required upload:
- ❑ Project budget using the Richard King Mellon Foundation's template

Key Terms and Topics:

Direct expenses are specific to programs or services.

Indirect expenses are those expenses typically categorized as "Management and General"; "Administrative and Management"; or "Fundraising" according to the IRS and FASB functional expense allocation guidelines. Indirect expenses are associated with running the organization as a whole.

We fund direct and indirect expenses for organizations that are not universities or research institutions. If your organization is a university or research institution, we will only fund direct expenses associated with the proposal.

For other organizations, we do not have a recommended direct/ indirect expense ratio for the project budget.

Section: Executive Certification

Required upload:
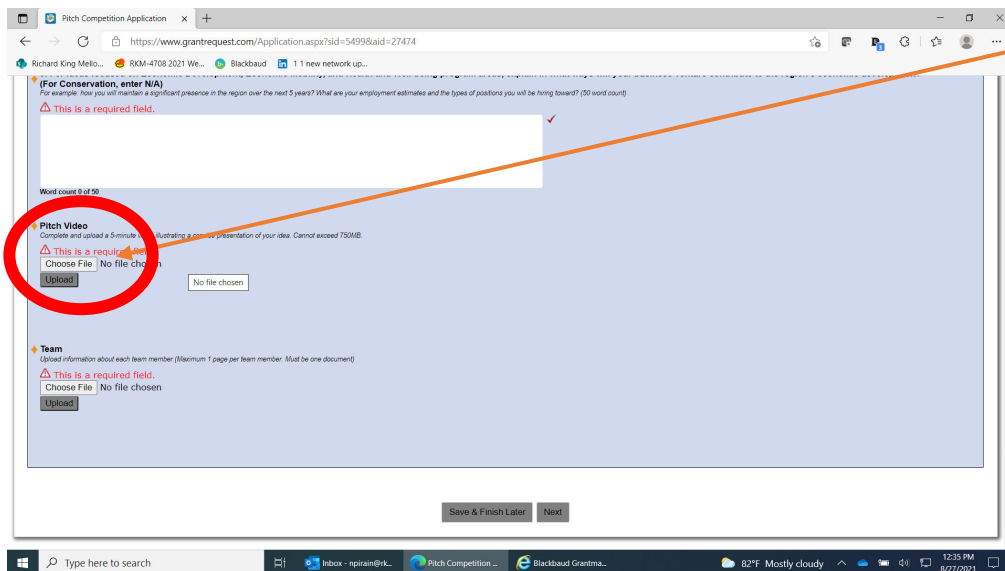- ❑ Executive Director & Board Certification

Optional upload:
- ❑ A single PDF or other document providing any other information that you deem an essential part of this application. The optional upload section can be used for letters of support, MOUs, or other documents that assist you believe will strengthen your application.

04 - Technical Assistance for the Online Application

- If you have questions regarding how to verify your organization's status as a nonprofit or governmental entity, please contact us at rkmf@rkmf.org or call 412-392-2800.
- You can save an application in progress and return to it later by clicking on "Save and Finish Later." After you click on this button, it will return you to the saved application page. You will need to reopen your application to continue working.
- Limit your use of bullets and other formatting; copy and paste as needed.
- Once your application is properly submitted, you will receive an e-mail acknowledgement. Add mail@grantapplication.com to your safe senders list to ensure you receive all system communications.
- Cookies must be enabled on your browser
- If you can't remember the email address and/or the password that you used to log onto your online portal, please rkmf@rkmf.org.

Attaching files:

First, choose your file.

The file's name will appear beside the "choose file" button
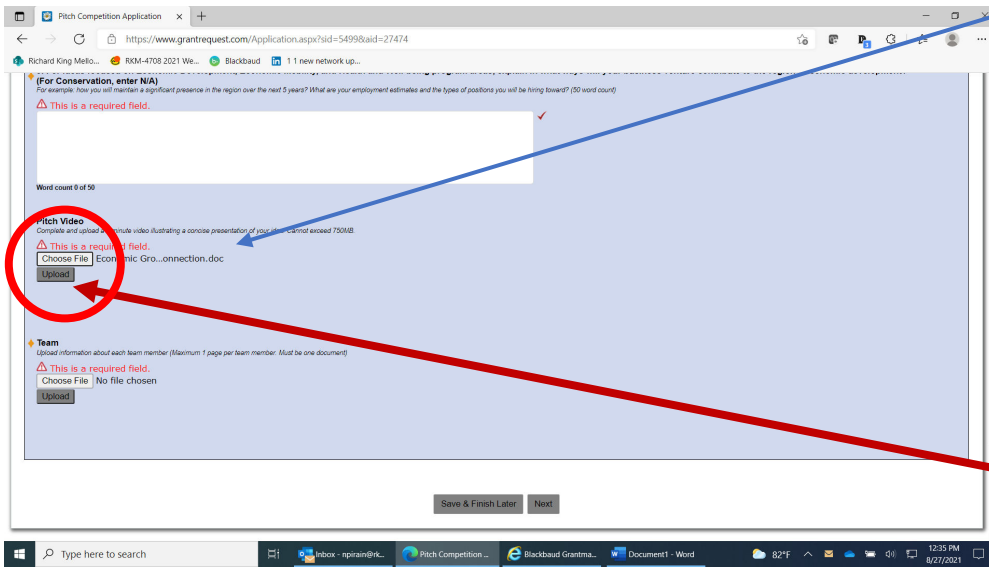
Click on the "Upload" button
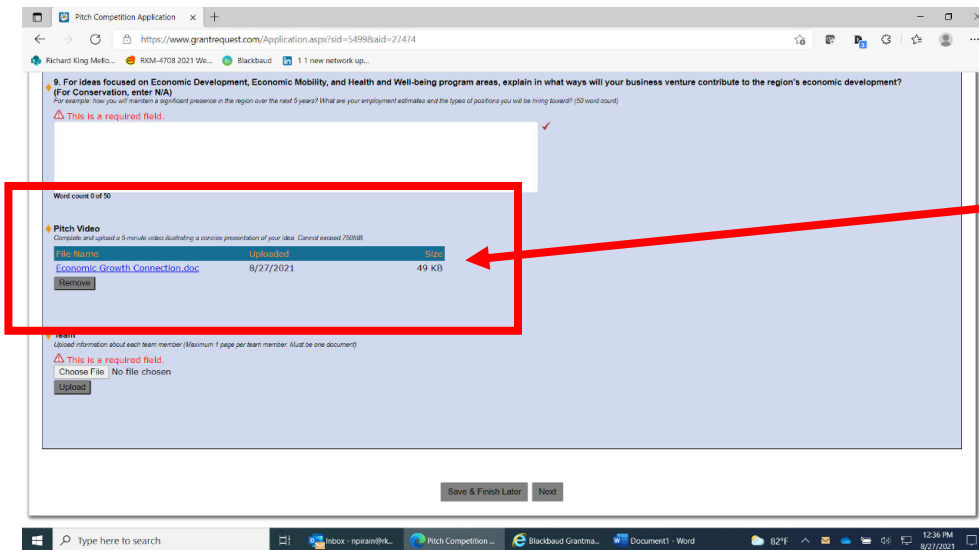
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