



THE CAROLYN SMITH
FOUNDATION

Frequently Asked Questions

Clarity for Every Step of the Journey

We want partners to feel informed, supported, and confident as they explore whether our funding aligns with their work. Below are answers to the questions we hear most often about our grantmaking approach, eligibility, timeline, and application process.

About the Carolyn Smith Foundation

Where is The Carolyn Smith Foundation headquartered?

We are based in Hendersonville, Tennessee.

Eligibility & Priorities

Who is eligible to apply for funding?

Organizations must:

- Be a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit
- Primarily serve Middle Tennessee, with emphasis on Davidson and Sumner Counties
- Have been in operation for at least two years

Do you fund organizations outside of Middle Tennessee?

Yes. While most of our funding stays in Middle Tennessee, we occasionally support statewide, national, or international organizations, especially within our animal welfare, environment, and healthcare portfolios.

What issues do you prioritize?

Our top priorities for 2026 include:

- Cycle of Economic Prosperity (housing, food security, economic mobility)
- Cures for Dementia and Neurodegenerative Diseases (research, treatment, advocacy)
- We also welcome opportunities in: Animal Welfare, Arts & Culture, Education, Environment, and Healthcare.

What does CSF not fund?

- Individuals
- Political parties or candidates
- Religious organizations seeking funding for a religious purpose
- Organizations that unlawfully discriminate or are hostile to individuals based on age, religion, gender, ethnicity, or orientation

Grant Structure & Timeline

What is the difference between the Spring and Fall cycles?

- **Spring Cycle – Operational Grants**
Open application period from January 1 – March 1. These grants support organizational health and community impact.
- **Fall Cycle – Invitation-Only**
Select partners may be invited to apply for strategic initiatives, capital campaigns, or medical research, treatment, and advocacy projects.

When will we hear back after submitting an application?

Organizations will be notified following our **May board meeting** each year.

Can I share additional information beyond the operational grant application?

Yes. The application includes an optional section where you can share information about strategic initiatives, capital needs, or medical research projects for consideration in our invitation-only Fall cycle.

How long are your grants?

Operational Grants are one-year commitments. Select Fall Cycle grants may receive one-year or multi-year support depending on the scope of the initiative.



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Application Process

How do I apply for a grant?

Applications open January 1 – March 1. Visit our grant portal to create an account, start an application, or return to an existing one.

What should we highlight in our application?

We encourage you to be open about both your strengths and your challenges. We value:

- Organizational health
- Demonstrated community impact
- Strategic partnerships
- Clear plans for measuring outcomes

Middle Tennessee has a strong nonprofit community. We appreciate thoughtful collaboration and shared efforts to increase impact.

Can fiscally sponsored organizations apply?

Yes. Organizations with a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor are eligible to apply.

I received a grant last year. Do I complete the same application?

Returning partners will see a slightly modified application with additional questions to help us understand progress from the previous year.

Support & Troubleshooting

What if I forget my grant portal login?

Use the “Forgot Password” option in the portal to reset your login credentials.

Can I contact someone if I have questions?

Yes. If you have questions about eligibility, timing, or the application process, please reach out through our contact form. We’re happy to help.



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Contact:

Katherine Louw, Executive Director
info@carolynsmithfoundation.org

1050 Glenbrook Way, Suite 480, #506
Hendersonville, TN 37075