

# Grant Guidelines



The CMA Foundation awards grants every year to non-profit public service organizations that closely match the Foundation's mission -improving and sustaining music education programs everywhere while supporting worthwhile causes important to the Country Music Association.

## Eligibility

In order to be eligible, an applicant organization must be an organization that is exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code ("IRC"), and not a private foundation as described in IRC Section 509(a). An applicant must be in good standing with its state of incorporation and the Internal Revenue Service.

The Foundation approves grants that will have a significant and lasting impact on a group as well as its community through music education focused programs. A request needs to demonstrate a visible, apparent and immediate need and be consistent with the Foundation's primary focus, improving and sustaining music education programs everywhere.

## Programs qualified for funding include:

- Organizations committed to restoring music education programs
- Instrumental music programs (access and restoring)
- Music instruction
- Educator development on behalf of music education
- Projects important to the Country Music Association (as identified by CMA)

First year grant applicants should not exceed \$20,000. Grant requests present Requests for general operating support are not eligible for consideration. Requests for start-up projects may be considered for new initiatives that address important, unmet community needs and that demonstrate a potential for ongoing operational support from other sources. Each organization should present strong financial documentation in their application.

## In addition, the Foundation will NOT fund grants for the following purposes or activities:

- *Individuals;*
- *Newsletters, magazines;*
- *Projects of churches and religious organizations that primarily benefit their own members (exception: church-based programs with broad community support and separate financial statements);*
- *Sponsorship of special events or similar fundraising and advertising activities;*
- *Stand-alone books, films or videos;*
- *Stand-alone travel expenses for conferences;*
- *Legislative lobbying or other political purposes;*
- *Regular operating budget support;*
- *Debt retirement; or*
- *Loans.*
- *Other Foundational giving activities*
- *Capital campaigns*
- *Private schools*

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## Decision Process

The CMA Foundation's Board of Directors review grant applications once a year. The Foundation's grant cycle is August 1<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>. All grant applications must be submitted electronically through our online system. The Foundation will only consider those grants.

All organizations requesting grants are subject to a review process that includes an initial interview with Foundation staff, the submission of an application, a possible site visit, and ultimate approval by the Foundation's Board of Directors.

The Foundation's Board of Directors shall make decisions based on findings and recommendations prepared by the Foundation staff. Each applicant will be notified in writing promptly after a decision on a proposal has been made.

If a grant award is approved by the Foundation's Board of Directors, the grantee organization will be asked to sign a grant contract that sets forth the terms and conditions of the grant and which, when fully signed, will be a binding legal agreement between the grantee organization and the Foundation. Funds will be disbursed to grantees pursuant to a disbursement schedule and method acceptable to the Foundation and as set forth in the grant contract.

## Final Progress Report Evaluation

Grant recipients must submit a final report detailing the progress made in accomplishing the goals and objectives of the grant in a format acceptable to the Foundation. This progress report is required to include supporting financial statements that account for how the grant funds were spent.

The final report must clearly demonstrate that Foundation funds were expended for the approved purposes for which they were granted. Funds not used for those approved purposes must be returned to the Foundation unless a specific waiver has been approved by the Foundation's Board of Directors and communicated in writing to the grantee. On rare occasions, a request may be approved to use unspent funds for other special needs.

Subsequent grant applications that may receive approval by the Foundation will not be paid until the final progress report is received and the grant evaluation is found to be complete and acceptable to the Foundation. The final progress report must be reviewed and signed by the grantee organization's Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director.

## Board's Discretion

The Foundation's Board of Directors has the ultimate discretion as to the approval of all grants (and the terms and conditions thereof) and may, in its discretion, give final approval for any grants that are funded outside these guidelines.

## Grant Requirements for the Application

### I. Program Information

- Mission
- Description of activities
- Budget as related to program
- Program outcomes
- Growth plan for future years
- Relevant research/survey data collected from program

### II. Organizational Information

- Brief organizational background
- Listing of other major initiatives organization plans to execute for current fiscal year
- Current list of Board of Directors
- Copy of Charter & Bylaws

### III. Financial Information

- Independently audited financial records for last two fiscal years
- Approved budget for current fiscal year
- Projected revenue and expenditures for program requesting funding
- Copy of IRS letter granting 501(c)3 status
- Copy of most recent 990

### IV. Recognition Opportunities

- Marketing/promotional opportunities
- Press opportunities
- Events