

Microsoft Community-First Grants

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the Microsoft Community-First Grants?

The Community-First Grants is a new application-based grant program that awards selected grantees with one-time, project-based funding to address a current need or opportunity based on a unique set of criteria. The first cycle is open for applications September 21, 2026 - October 23, 2026, and concludes with a celebratory event November 9, 2026, for awarded grantees.

Each cycle carries a unique theme defined by variables: funding model, geographic focus, sector focus, etc.

Nonprofits that have received or have been invited to receive Microsoft corporate grant funding in 2026 are not eligible for the Community-First Grants.

A second cycle will open in Spring 2027.

2. How much funding is available this cycle?

We will award 25 nonprofits with grants of \$20,000 each.

3. What are the eligibility criteria to apply this cycle?

- Must be a registered 501(c)(3) public charity in good standing
- Actively serves and operates within King County, Washington
- Have not received or been invited to receive Microsoft corporate grant funding in 2026
- Proposed project fits directly into one of our four key focus areas

4. What geography does this cycle cover?

Nonprofits based in King County and serving King County.

5. Can we apply if we already receive Microsoft funding?

No. Nonprofits that have received or have been invited to receive Microsoft corporate grant funding in 2026 are not eligible for the Community-First Grants. Nonprofits that have received Microsoft technology grants or Microsoft matching gifts through Microsoft's Employee Giving Programs are eligible.

6. What focus areas can projects support this cycle?

Projects may address participation, support and/or connection to one or more of the following:

- Civic Life: supporting connection, participation and vibrant community spaces
- Education and Workforce Development: expanding learning, skills and pathways to opportunity
- Housing, Human Services and Basic Needs: strengthening essential services and support for people and families

- Sustainability and Transportation: supporting more connected, sustainable communities

7. What kinds of projects are a good fit?

Examples of projects include repairing or modernizing a facility, expanding a food pantry, establishing a community garden, enhancing a STEM learning lab, upgrading essential equipment, furnishing transitional units, and building neighborhood gathering spaces, etc.

8. What are the project requirements for this cycle?

A project must address a clearly defined community need, align with the organization's mission and expertise, demonstrate community impact, benefit underserved or economically disadvantaged populations where applicable, be achievable within the proposed timeline and budget, and show how funding will launch, expand, improve, or complete the project.

9. When does the application period for this cycle open and close?

Applications are open September 21, 2026 and close October 23, 2026.

10. How do we apply?

Apply through the [Microsoft Community-First Grant application](#)

11. Is there support available while we prepare our application?

Microsoft staff will host virtual “Office Hours” on Fridays at 12:00 p.m. from September 25, 2026, through October 16, 2026. Applicants may join any session to ask questions about the Community-First Grant application via this meeting link: [Join Applicant Office Hours on Microsoft Teams](#)

Office Hours Dates

- Friday, September 25 at 12:00 p.m.
- Friday, October 2 at 12:00 p.m.
- Friday, October 9 at 12:00 p.m.
- Friday, October 16 at 12:00 p.m.

12. What criteria are applications scored against?

Applications will be evaluated based on whether the proposed project addresses a clearly defined community need; aligns with the organization's mission and expertise; demonstrates community impact; benefits underserved or economically disadvantaged populations, where applicable; is achievable within the proposed timeline and budget; and clearly explains how the funding will launch, expand, improve, or complete the project.

13. What is required from awarded grantees?

Selected nonprofits will be required to attend a community celebration at Microsoft the evening of November 9, 2026 and collaborate with Microsoft on storytelling about the grant and its impact on the community.

14. When will we be notified?

All applicants will be notified of the decision on November 3, 2026.

15. Will there be another cycle? Can previous applicants and grantees apply in future cycles?

Microsoft will open another Community-First Grant application cycle in the Spring 2027. Community-First grantees selected in a cycle may not apply again for two years. Applicants that weren't selected in a cycle are welcome to apply again in future cycles if they meet that cycle criteria.

16. What if I still have questions?

If you have further questions about the Microsoft Community-First Grant program, please contact **La Shanda Hurst**, lashur@microsoft.com.