



COMMUNITY IMPACT GRANT GUIDELINES

FY2026 (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026)

Grant Cycle will open December 2, 2024

Application must be submitted in

ZoomGrants Grant Due Date: February 2, 2025

No later than 11:59 PM

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Pending budget approval, Richland County Council set aside up to \$1,764,000 of the General Operating Fund for the Community Impact Grant (CIG) Fund for fiscal year 2026. Up to Sixty percent (\$1,058,400) of CIG funds will be allocated to identified Community Partners listed at the end of this document. Up to forty percent (\$705,600) will be allocated for competitive grants as described in this document. This amount may be reduced to incur any costs for grant application evaluation. This program is designed to provide financial support to organizations and agencies that carry out community-based programs and/or services throughout Richland County. In keeping with the mission of Richland County Government, this program attempts to encourage organizations to continue to offer innovative and much needed services that enhance the quality of life for all citizens of this County.

GRANT TIMELINE

Request for Applications:	December 2, 2024 – February 2, 2025
Application Due Date:	February 2, 2025, 11:59 pm
Community Impact Grant Recommendations	With FY 2026 Budget Consideration
Grant Award Notifications:	By June 27, 2025
Quarterly Reports by Recipients:	Due by October 31, 2025, January 31, 2026, April 30, 2026
Final Reports from Recipients:	Due by July 31, 2026

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND DESIGN

Organizations that are determined as charitable under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and nonprofit organizations registered as a charity with the Secretary of State. **Richland County will not award grants to individuals, fraternal organizations and organizations that support and/or endorse political campaigns.**

The United States Supreme Court has said that faith-based organizations may not use direct government support to support "inherently religious" activities, therefore, religious organizations may receive funding; however, Richland County may not sponsor nor provide financial support to a religious organization in a manner which would actively involve it in a religious activity (i.e. public funds must not be used for a religious purpose). Thus, any funds provided must be solely utilized for secular purposes and the principal or primary goal of the sponsored activity must not be to advance religion. Any religious organization requesting funds must be specific in the groups that will be served and purpose fulfilled by these funds.

The program fund is set up as follows

Up to sixty percent of the annual County allocation shall be distributed to Groups identified by Council as Community Partners. Community Partners must submit an annual application indicating the requested amount and proposed use of funds along with all other application data. Community partners are not eligible for competitive grant funding. Up to forty percent of the annual County allocation shall be distributed based upon competitive grant applications. Organizations can apply for funding up to \$50,000 for only one project. Projects that focus on multiple impact areas are only eligible for one grant. Organizations may only submit one application annually.

Grant recipient organizations may not re-grant or sub-grant County funds to other organizations. All funds must be spent on direct program expenditures by the organization who is granted the allocation.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- Organizations must apply to be considered for funding each year.
- Organizations must disclose any and all funds received from Richland County.
- Organizations that receive other funds from Council may have awards adjusted by such amount of other funds.
- Richland County Council shall make all awards pursuant to this grant program.

PROGRAM CRITERIA (proposed request must address one of the following)

- The activity meets service-type activities outlined in the organization’s mission, long-range plans, goals and objectives.
- The activity, in whole or in part, provides opportunities for underserved populations in Richland County.
- The activity provides solutions by way of systems or approaches that can prevent, mitigate or resolve individual, family, or community problems as outlined in the categories of the application.

FY2026 Key Impact Areas (proposed request must address one of the following):

- Programs to promote home ownership through education & financial planning
- Youth activities to reduce community violence, improve safety, and develop workforce skills
- Programs to create sustainable childcare for working parents to further workforce development
- Food Insecurity
- Veterans assistance to improve health and wellness

THE PROGRAM WILL NOT FUND (however, not limited to):

- Fundraising Projects
- Debt Reduction
- Endowment Development
- Medical Research
- Conference Travel
- Conference Underwriting or Sponsorship
- Gift Cards; Awards and Cash Prizes
- Regular budgeted operating expenditures
- Asset purchases
- CIG Awards cannot be used to replenish financial reserves or satisfaction of settlements or judgements.

GRANT APPLICATION

The grant application must be submitted in ZoomGrants through Richland County’s website. Make sure all fields are completed as incomplete applications will not be reviewed by the Committee. Contact the Grants Manager if you have any difficulties completing the application. Once complete, save a copy and print for your records.

If you cut and paste information from Word, make sure your information is not cut off. The application components are as follows:

- Mission Statement – Include the organization’s mission statement as found in your bylaws. You may also include any long-range plans and goals for your agency as a whole.
- Geographic information – what areas of Richland County will be the project focus. Please note census tracts if possible.
- Project Impact Priority – Which County-wide strategic priority the project helps to accomplish
- Organization Background – Demonstration of recent accomplishments and success with programs similar to the one in your application.
- Project Description – This is the “meat” of the application where you describe your project – who, when, what, why and whereas specifically as possible including characteristics of the community or individuals that will directly benefit from the project.
- Benefit to the Community – Detail who is being served by your project, geographic location of your audience, how the project impacts the community. Please be as specific as possible about target population.
- Sustainability – How will the program be sustained in years following any award from the County?
- Collaborative Partners/Efforts – Specifically describe how your organization will work with others community organizations on this project. Provide a definitive outline of your partner’s roles, specific numbers to be served in the unincorporated areas, and letters of support from agencies for this project as well as the districts the partners serve. Outcomes – Share what result do you want to achieve and how will you measure success?

PROGRAM BUDGET

A budget section is provided for you as part of the application. This section applies only to the project outlined in the application. Please note that all grant funds must be expended by the recipient organization. Re-granting or sub-granting of funds is not allowed.

Expenditures must be consistent with the application budget. Only goods and services that comply with the Community Impact Grant Guidelines are permitted. The budget should reflect in financial terms the actual specific costs of achieving the objectives of the project(s) you propose in your application.

Amounts listed in the Community Impact Grant Request column should total the amount of funds requested in the application. Please make sure that all expenses in –Community Impact Grant column relate to the proposed project outlined in the Project Description.

Note that there are blank spaces in the budget section of the application to provide additional expense categories as all budgets are not the same. Feel free to use these additional blank expense spaces for other categories not listed. For example, your project may have a transportation component. You can add a budget category these types of expenses.

Under project revenues, list known and anticipated funding sources, including any that are pending. Also include any in-kind contributions under project revenues. This section shows the Committee if your organization or others are contributing to the project outlined in the application. Attach copies of pending grants documentation (grant award letters) in the documents section of the grant application.

Please do not include agency administrative costs or organizational overhead expenses in your grant budget. All expenses should directly relate to the project or program that is outlined in the application.

Budget Narrative (Grant Funds Only) - Please include a brief but specific 1-2 sentence description for each category included in the program budget. Make sure expenses are reflected in the project description. For example:

Contractual – 2 consultants to work 10 hours at \$25/hour to conduct 5 financial training workshops

Program expenses - \$500 for financial training workshop curriculum, \$500 rental fee for training space

APPLICATION PACKAGE

In order to be considered for funding, applicants must submit a complete application package for the Community Impact Grant program in ZoomGrants. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Complete applications include:

- 1) Completed and electronically initialed application. You can complete the application at:
<https://zoomgrants.com/gprop.asp?donorid=2236>
 - Answer all questions and complete each section. “N/A” and “See Attached” are not valid responses.
 - Electronic Initials by board chair or the executive director is requested in ZoomGrants - If your organization does not have an Executive Director, please note this in the application.
- 2) Project Budget and Full Narrative (form included with the application)
- 3) Required Attachments:
 - Current organization operating budget for the last two years reflecting sources and amounts of income and expenditures for the organization as a whole, not just the program outlined in the application.
 - IRS determination letter indicating the organization’s 501 c 3 charitable status
 - Proof of current registration as a charity with the SC Secretary of State’s Office.
 - Current list of board of directors
 - Most recent 990 tax return. If you file a 990 post-card please also attach a financial report showing financial status.
 - Organization’s current W-9
 - Current Richland County business license or business license assessment survey form (this completed form shows that a business license is not needed for your organization).
 - Proof of Insurance: W/C (required if there are 4 or more employees and payroll exceeds \$3,000 and/or General Liability).
 - Letters of support from Community Collaboration Partners

Dissemination strategy for county-wide projects and pending grant award documents are a required attachment for applicants indicating either in their grant application.

Attachments **MUST** be submitted in ZoomGrants along with the proposal in order to be considered complete.

APPLICATION EVALUATION

Grant applications are reviewed by the Community Impact Grant Committee. The Committee will use the following evaluation criteria to evaluate applications and proposed projects. The individual factors are important in project evaluation, as they are an indication of the degree to which the proposed project will contribute to the citizens in Richland County. Make sure these factors are incorporated into your application. While application evaluations may be used to assist in award determination, Council shall not waive its rights to use discretion in award decisions. These factors, with their corresponding point values, are:

Project Summary: (Up to 35 Points)

- Does the proposal state an objective and does the objective fit the mission and long-range plans, goals and objectives of the organization?
- Does the proposal provide a strong sense of need for the project/program and does it state what the funds will be used for?
- Does the proposal address who will be served and how many?
- Does the proposal state what will be the benefit to persons served?
- Does the proposal state a targeted underserved population?
- Does the proposal provide a program to prevent, mitigate or resolve individual, family, or community problems?
- Does the proposal state how the program will be evaluated once completed?
- Does the proposal describe how citizens will be informed about the available services?

Project Impact: (Up to 30 Points)

- Is the proposal clear about how the project will work?
- Is there a timeframe outlined in the proposal; is the project ready to start?
- Are all aspects of the project feasible?
- Does the project provide a solution for the identified problem?
- Is the project innovative and provides solutions to problem?

Organization Background: (Up to 20 Points)

- Historical or current program experience indicated.
- Historical experience with targeted population addressed.
- Evidence of other successful experience relevant to the success of this proposal.
- Evidence of capable staff to carry out program/project.
- Does organization history indicate collaborative efforts with other entities?

Budget: (Up to 15 Points)

- Is the budget detailed and understandable?
- Is there another confirmed source of revenue to assist with this project/program?
- Is the project cost reasonable?
- Does budget incorporate any in-kind cost participation?
- Does the budget expense detail section include detailed cost calculation data (e.g., specific cost/quantity for personnel, supplies, travel) and information showing how County grant funds will be spent?

DEADLINE

Richland County will accept proposals in ZoomGrants until Sunday, February 2, 2025 at 11:59 PM EST. These applications are available at <https://zoomgrants.com/gprop.asp?donorid=2236>. Applications received *after* this date and time will not be considered. Fax, email transmissions or hand delivered applications will not be accepted.

AWARD NOTIFICATION

The Grants Manager will notify all applicant organizations of the funding outcome in writing in June 2025. Awards will be available for reimbursement beginning July 2025. Final reports for previous fiscal years, if applicable, must be received for all grants before payments are released. Non-compliance in all reporting periods may disqualify applicants for future funding opportunities until an applicant is fully compliant.

PAYMENT PROCEDURES

A Detailed Payment Request Form (found online at <http://www.richlandcountysc.gov/Government/Departments/Grants/Community-Impact-Grants>) must be submitted with required documentation. This includes: a signed IRS W-9 form, a current financial/balance sheet and list of grant expenditures (detailing invoice numbers, invoice date, vendor's name, amount of deposit/total; and, detail description of purchase/services rendered.)

Once the County has received your signed grant agreement, your agency may submit a payment request for up to 75% of the approved funds. The remaining 25% or the balance of the allocation may be provided on a reimbursement basis. A complete final report, receipts and proof of payment will be required for each expense at the time of requesting the remaining balance.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Richland County requires grantees to complete quarterly reports as outlined above during the award period. Each quarterly report should be accompanied by itemized receipts/invoices and proof of payment for funds drawn down in the previous quarter.

At the completion of the grant funded project, Richland County requires grantees to complete a final report for Community Impact Grant funds. Grantees are required to show proof of all grant expenditures (itemized invoices and proof of payment). Grantees are asked to report on attendance/impact numbers, program success or failure as well as the impact on Richland County. Each grantee will receive a copy of or a link to the reporting documents with their award packet and report forms will also be sent via email.

Grantees must acknowledge the receipt of Community Impact funding by including the Richland County Government logo, or by listing "Funding Provided by Richland County Government" on program/project advertising, marketing and promotional materials, website or in the organization's annual report. Examples of this must be included in your final report.

Recipients must be compliant with timely quarterly reporting in all quarters of the grant period to be considered eligible for funding in a following fiscal year.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT NOTICE

Please be advised that all materials submitted on behalf of the Community Impact Grant Funds program are subject to disclosure based on the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

- No person, based on race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, ancestry, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, veteran status, military discharge status, citizenship status or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity should be excluded from participation in be denied the benefit of or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under the program or activity funding in whole or in part by Community Impact grant funds.
- Employment made by or resulting from Community Impact Grant funding shall not discriminate against any employee or applicant on the basis on race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, ancestry, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, veteran status, military discharge status, citizenship status or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights of handicap, age, race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.
- None of the funds, materials, property, or services provided directly or indirectly under Community Impact Grant funding shall be used for any partisan political activity, or to further the election or defeat of any candidate for public office.

QUESTIONS

Please call Ms. Matiah Pough, Grants Manager at (803)576-5459 or email Pough.Matiah@richlandcountysc.gov.

FY 2026 COMMUNITY PARTNERS

It is the intent of Council to re-evaluate the list of Community Partners at least every three years. While an organization may be listed as a Community Partner, Council reserves the right to modify this list as it sees fit to maximize community access to resources. County Council has a general objective to see a reduction of Community Partners reliance on Community Impact Grants for funding over time. Please note that no future Council may be bound by an action of a prior Council.

1. Senior Resources
2. MIRCI
3. Community Relations Council
4. Palmetto AIDS Life Support
5. Columbia Chamber of Commerce (BRAC)
6. Transitions Homeless Center
7. Columbia Urban League
8. Oliver Gospel Mission
9. Pathways to Healing