



## COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The AEO Foundation is a 501(c)3 private foundation established in 1999 to support the community in partnership with AEO Inc, our Brands, and our associates.

### **MISSION:**

We are committed to showing the world that there's REAL power in the optimism of youth by supporting causes that educate and empower teens and young adults.

### **Funding Criteria**

Your organization must:

- Show tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code if in the US;
- Demonstrate that your specific program/proposal falls within the scope of the AEO Foundation's mission statement;
- Apply for a program that serves all or a portion of the Foundation's target demographic, which is youth age 15 – 25 years old;
- Direct at least 70% of money raised as part of overall operating budget towards program beneficiaries;
- Provide documentation to AEO verifying financial and non-profit status;
- Have a location in or near the following metropolitan areas: Pittsburgh; New York City; Ottawa, Kansas; Hazleton, PA; San Francisco; or Mississauga, Ontario;
- Show that the program or project in your proposal has a positive impact on the surrounding community;
- Be inclusive in policies and practices involving all genders, races, ages, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or creed, with no religious component required of participants. You will be required to submit a copy of your most recent organizational diversity and inclusion policy or elaborate on how you maintain inclusive programs and practices.

### **Projects/Proposals**

The AEO Foundation looks for programs in our communities that are serving all or a portion of youth in our target demographic: ages 15 - 25 years old. This is the most important component of your grant application. Be prepared to be specific about the age range supported by your programming or project.

Please note: We understand that many programs are tailored to a range of age groups. For instance, a non-profit program serving high school students age 13 - 18 would qualify for an AEO Foundation Community Grant.

### **Application Process**

The AEO Foundation's grant application and reporting process is entirely digital. Please visit our [Grant Portal](#) to create an account and submit your application. You may start an application, save it, and come back to it at any time during the open cycle period. Paper or email versions of proposals will not be accepted.

### **Timeline**

The AEO Foundation has three cycles per year; applications will need to be submitted before the cycle deadline to be considered for that round. The 2024 Community Grant Program deadlines are:

Spring Cycle: April 10, 2024

Fall Cycle: September 4, 2024

Winter Cycle: January 8, 2025

Non-profit organizations can only receive one grant per calendar year. Please check back on the portal to see the status of your application: whether it is Submitted, In Review, Accepted, Declined, or, in Reporting stage.

### **Grant Amounts**

If an organization is NEW and has not yet received funding from the AEO Foundation, we ask that you submit a proposal for a grant of \$5,000. This \$5,000 can support a new or ongoing program, and you can have additional funders if necessary.

If an organization has received funding from the AEO Foundation before, your organization is eligible to apply for a grant in the range of \$5,000 - \$15,000. Please carefully consider what funding your program requires and be specific about the financial need in your application.

Please do not apply for less than \$5,000 or more than \$15,000 unless directed otherwise.

All grants are issued in \$ USD.

### **Award Process**

You can expect to hear about your grant application approximately 4 weeks after the cycle deadline. All organizations will receive an email update, followed by a mailed letter. Those organizations awarded grants should expect a physical check in the mail. All organizations who are awarded a grant will need to log into the grant portal to confirm their award information.

### **Reporting**

Every organization that receives a grant will need to submit a follow up report, due one calendar year from the grant award. After they confirm award information, the organization then has the option to submit a report at any time for the funded program. If an organization completes their

program or project, they may submit their completed report before the year is up. After the grant report is submitted, organizations can re-apply for additional funding for the next year. Organizations will need to log into the grant portal to submit their report.

### **Re-Application**

If your proposal was declined, you are welcome to re-apply. We recommend reaching out to [grants@ae.com](mailto:grants@ae.com) for feedback on how to strengthen your next application. If you were awarded a grant, you will need to submit your Final Report for the first grant before you submit a new application. Non-profits are only funded once per calendar year, even if there are multiple programs for funding consideration.

### **Documents Needed**

You will need to upload a copy your W-9, a copy of the current IRS determination letter indicating a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status, and the program budget for this project.

### **Ineligible Programs**

The AEO Foundation will not contribute to:

- Fashion shows or requests related to product
- Organizations that discriminate based on race, creed, color, sex, age, national origin, veteran status, physical or mental disabilities, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc.
- Individual religious organizations
- Political organizations, campaigns or candidates for political office
- Lobbying groups
- Medical research or other medical-related causes
- Veteran or fraternal organizations
- Individuals
- Advertising or event sponsorship
- Capital campaigns such as building grants
- Organizations that spend more than 30% of their total budget on fundraising efforts.

### **Grant Application Questions**

Organizations should be prepared to answer the following questions on the application:

- **Name of Program or Project** What is the name of the program for which you are requesting funding?
- **Time Period of Program/Project** Please describe the time period over which the specific program or project that this funding is supporting will take place.
- **Total Program Budget** What is the budget for this specific program over the time period listed above?
- **Additional Funding** Are you seeking or have you secured other funding for this specific project? If you have secured other funding for this project, please list the funders and amount.

- **Program Purpose & Goals** How will your program address real and pressing needs in the community? What are your goals for the program during the specified funding period for this grant?
- **Target Populations** Who is the intended population to be served by ONLY this program? As available, please include information related to age, race, income-level, and disability status.
- **Individuals Served** If fully-funded, approximately how many individuals will be served by this funding in the specific program referenced in this proposal? Please provide a numerical answer only.
- **Associate Engagement** Are there opportunities for our AEO Associates to volunteer with this project or program during the grant period? Are there other volunteer opportunities at your organization? Please be specific if there are clearances or other documents needed to volunteer.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

When should I apply and when can I expect to receive funds?

*Please see below for when AEO Foundation will be accepting applications during the 2024 fiscal year and when organizations can expect decisions to be made about their proposal:*

Spring Cycle

- DEADLINE: April 10, 2024

- DECISION: by May 15, 2024

Fall Cycle

- DEADLINE: September 4, 2024

- DECISION: by October 2, 2024

Winter Cycle

- DEADLINE: January 8, 2025

- DECISION: by February 5, 2025

I am having technical issues with the grant portal.

*Please review the [Wizehive Portal Applicant FAQ](#) first to address most portal problems. If you still need assistance, contact WizeHive Support using the contact form in the knowledgebase.*

My organization is located near but not directly in one of your funding locations. Are we still eligible?

*Please reach out to [grants@ae.com](mailto:grants@ae.com) for feedback on eligibility related to location!*

If I have multiple programs in your service areas, can I apply for more than one grant?

*The AEO Foundation issues one grant per organization per year. You may apply for multiple locations, but please note that, if selected for funding, the Foundation will only award one of the program requests.*

### Additional Questions

Please reach out to [grants@ae.com](mailto:grants@ae.com) for any additional questions about eligibility, application status, timeline, or any other related topics.