



2022 10-Year Committee Guide

Thank you for volunteering to serve on the **10-Year Committee**. We are so grateful for the important contributions you will make in this critical step of the grant cycle. This guide includes a great deal of information about the process. In addition, we are readily available to assist you if you have questions.

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About the Cummings \$25 Million Grant Program

The Foundation and 80 generous, insightful volunteers identified 140 organizations to receive grants of at least \$100,000 each. Among the winners were first-time recipients as well as nonprofits that had previously received grants of \$100,000 from Cummings Foundation. Forty of this latter group of repeat recipients will be elevated to 10-year awards, ranging mostly from \$200,000 to \$500,000 each and totaling \$15 million.

The Foundation has already identified 15 of these long-term grant recipients. Volunteers in this group will select the final 25 recipients from 35 candidates.



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Our Approach to Nonprofits

They are the heroes: the nonprofit executive directors who also serve as HR managers, development officers, and marketing managers; the program staff who work diligently and passionately, often for low pay and even less recognition; the volunteers who devote precious free time in service to others. They are the heroes—not us.

We are privileged to be in a position to support their life-changing, equity-promoting, barrier-breaking, purpose-igniting work. We are not seeking to judge, eliminate, or vote out. Rather we endeavor to learn and discover synergies so Cummings Foundation can invest in organizations and efforts that match its values and priorities and that have the most meaningful, positive, and sustainable impact on local communities.

Foundation staff and volunteers possess valuable expertise gained through varied professional and personal experiences; however, we recognize and respect the intimate knowledge that nonprofit representatives have of the causes and the people to which they have dedicated their careers. The grant candidates are the true boots-on-the-ground experts, and they deserve not just a seat at the table, but the seat at the head.

We respect the beliefs of diverse populations and the uniqueness of individuals, and we believe that all people deserve to live with dignity and to have the opportunity to improve their circumstances. We recognize that we all have biases, but we strive to be aware of them, set them aside, and eliminate them from our thinking, questions, and comments. We welcome candid reminders from others when we demonstrate an unconscious bias.

*We are most grateful for the participation of our volunteers
and for the respect and kindness they show to all grant candidates.*

Our Guiding Principles

Having embarked on our collective journey of philanthropy, we pledge to work to help ensure that no one is ever left behind.

Recognizing that the dignity of every human person is fundamental, Cummings Foundation’s primary goal is to help meet the most basic needs of all people in all segments of our society.

We seek to promote and empower the social and economic inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or other status.

We will work to improve the lives of those within our priority funding regions by directly supporting the work of other effective charitable organizations.

And we will endeavor through our local outreach to aid the furthest behind first.

—*Bill and Joyce Cummings*



The “color wheel” is a photo of the actual pin presented to Bill Cummings when he spoke at the United Nations in June 2019. Many of the words and sentiments were inspired by portions of the United Nations’ document, “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” Cummings Foundation, Inc. supports the [SDGs](#).

Presentation Days

During Presentation Days, representatives from each nonprofit organization will give a short presentation followed by a Q&A session. Bear in mind, all the nonprofits are already 2022 Cummings Foundation grant winners of at least \$100,000.

Presentation Days will take place at two Cummings organization conference spaces:

- **Monday, May 2:** 500 West Cummings Park, Woburn. Community Conference Room, Suite 2350. This space is being provided for nonprofits that requested accessibility accommodations. Located on the second floor, it is accessible via an elevator.
- **Tuesday, May 3 to Friday, May 6:** 200 West Cummings Park, Woburn. Loft Conference Room. *NOTE: This space requires climbing a set of 22 stairs.*

The candidates' applications and, if applicable, prior site visit and impact reports, will provide robust background information for committee members. Through talking with each organization's chosen representatives (e.g., executive director, program staff, volunteers, and if appropriate, a client), volunteers will seek to learn more about the candidate's work, how it has used its prior grant, the opportunities and challenges it faces, and how the organization is well positioned to maximize a decade of funding. We anticipate that the combination of written material, presentations, and time for Q&A will allow for thoughtful and informed discussion among committee members and confident decision-making.

Schedule

Monday, May 2

8:30 AM Nonprofit 1
9:30 AM Nonprofit 2
10:30 AM Nonprofit 3
11:30 AM Nonprofit 4
1:00 PM Nonprofit 5
2:00 PM Nonprofit 6
3:00 PM Nonprofit 7

Tuesday, May 3

8:30 AM Nonprofit 8
9:30 AM Nonprofit 9
10:30 AM Nonprofit 10
11:30 AM Nonprofit 11
1:00 PM Nonprofit 12
2:00 PM Nonprofit 13
3:00 PM Nonprofit 14

Wednesday, May 4

8:30 AM Nonprofit 15
9:30 AM Nonprofit 16
10:30 AM Nonprofit 17

11:30 AM Nonprofit 18
1:00 PM Nonprofit 19
2:00 PM Nonprofit 20
3:00 PM Nonprofit 21

Thursday, May 5

8:30 AM Nonprofit 22
9:30 AM Nonprofit 23
10:30 AM Nonprofit 24
11:30 AM Nonprofit 25
1:00 PM Nonprofit 26
2:00 PM Nonprofit 27
3:00 PM Nonprofit 28

Friday, May 6

8:30 AM Nonprofit 29
9:30 AM Nonprofit 30
10:30 AM Nonprofit 31
11:30 AM Nonprofit 32
1:00 PM Nonprofit 33
2:00 PM Nonprofit 34
3:00 PM Nonprofit 35

Before Presentation Days

Review background materials: The Foundation has provided copies of the grant applications and, if applicable, the most recent Impact Report and any Site Visit Reports for each assigned charity. You may also wish to peruse the nonprofits' websites and read news articles online.

Contact us with questions: We are readily available to answer your questions. Please reach out to the chairperson or Foundation staff if we can be of assistance.

During the Presentation

Be aware of the schedule: Seven nonprofits are scheduled per day (on the half-hour from 8:30 AM to 11:30 AM and the hour from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM) for 45-minute sessions. After the final presentation, you will decide which five nonprofits will have their grants elevated to 10-year awards.

Each organization was asked to prepare approximately 30 minutes of material, knowing that volunteers will likely ask questions throughout the 45-minute session. In our experience, these "presentations" often turn into engaging and enjoyable discussions.

Following their session, the nonprofit representatives will leave the room, allowing committee members 15 minutes to discuss and write notes before the next presentation. (Andrew Bishop will attend each session to help with time keeping, logistics, and transitions.)

Enjoy lunch: Cummings Foundation will provide lunch, as well as beverages and light snacks throughout the days. The 45-minute lunch (12:15 – 1:00 PM) will provide an opportunity to begin discussing the three morning candidates. There will certainly be time, however, for those who would like a break to check email, return phone calls, take a walk, etc.

Be inquisitive: Cummings Foundation has built a reputation for being friendly and supportive of nonprofits, so the tone of the discussion should match. That being said, this is an opportunity to learn as much as possible about the organization and to give its representatives the chance to address any concerns that committee members might have.

Take notes: Taking notes during each presentation and Q&A session will aid you in making your decisions at the end of the day. We will provide pens and pads of paper, but feel free to bring a laptop or tablet if you prefer.

After the Presentations

Share your thoughts: At the close of each Presentation Day, the committee chair, Paul Lohnes, will lead an open, respectful discussion of that day's candidates. Given that one of the benefits of our volunteer model is the diverse perspectives brought by each participant, we strongly encourage every volunteer to participate actively in this conversation.

Decide the winners: Before departing for the day, volunteers will collectively decide which five of the seven organizations will have their grants elevated to 10-year awards.

Make grant installment recommendations: Although the grant application asks for applicants' preferred annual installments, the actual disbursement schedules will be determined by the Foundation. The Foundation welcomes your input if you feel that a different disbursement than the one requested would be more appropriate.

Selection Criteria

Impact

Transformative. Game-changer. These are words grant winners often use to describe their Cummings grants. Please look for opportunities where grant funding would have the greatest impact, bearing in mind that impact can take many forms. One nonprofit may serve a large number of people, whereas another organization might serve a much smaller number, but in a long-term or in-depth manner. Both could provide enormous value.

Readiness

The Foundation is open to providing long-term funding to well-established nonprofits with long histories of success as well as younger organizations that have true potential and appear ready to rise. An organization should have strong leadership and a clear idea of how the funds will be beneficial in the first few years of the grant.

A good way to evaluate readiness is to ask, “If a 10-year grant were given, what would the nonprofit’s impact report look like three years from now?” How will it leverage this long-term award for maximum benefit?

10-Year Plan

The Cummings organization does *not* have a 10-year plan, so we do not expect grantees to have one either. The Foundation certainly has a sense of the direction it’s headed, but we understand that even the best-laid plans can change. The past two years are a concrete example of how circumstances beyond an organization’s control can have significant ramifications. The 10-year candidates were not asked to create a 10-year plan and should not be expected to provide one.

Other Factors to Consider

What would the organization have been unable to accomplish without its prior \$100,000 grant? Will the grant “move the needle” for the organization or its cause? Is the nonprofit innovative or entrepreneurial? Has it successfully pivoted in response to COVID-19? Does it have collaborative relationships with other entities?

Adapted from multiple sources, including The Lenny Zakim Fund

Cummings Foundation is committed to the creation of an inclusive, supportive environment for all people, regardless of differences. We strive to embody this spirit of inclusion during every interaction we have with nonprofit organizations. To that end, volunteers should avoid using language that is insensitive to cultural differences or that excludes or offends any group of people (based on their ability/disability, age, ethnicity and race, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, etc.).

Communication is not what you say, but how it's heard. Making a conscious effort to use language that is more inclusive offers us a chance to grow and become better communicators while also caring for those with whom we are communicating. Here are some guiding principles:

- **Put people first:** Default to person-first constructions that put the person ahead of his/her characteristics, e.g., instead of “disabled people” or “the homeless,” use “people with disabilities” or “people experiencing homelessness.” People-first language keeps the individual as the most essential element; there is more to each of us than our descriptors. Mention characteristics like gender, sexual orientation, religion, racial group, or ability only when relevant to the discussion.
- **Be respectful of a person or group’s preference regarding vocabulary and be guided in your communication by that preference.** Listen to the words they use, and adopt those terms, e.g., Latino, developmental disability, transgender. If you’re unsure about the preferred language, simply ask. Also, if you meet someone with a name that is unfamiliar to you, repeat it back to the person and ask if you’re pronouncing it correctly. Practice until you get it right.
- **Avoid microaggressions:** Impact is more important than intent, so make a real effort to avoid unintentional microinsults based on stereotypes and biases. Examples include: Telling a person of color, “You are so articulate;” asking a person who appears Asian, “Where are you from?”; and downplaying the reality of racism with comments such as, “I don’t see color.”
- **Avoid phrases that suggest victimhood or deficit,** e.g. suffers from, confined to a wheelchair, needy, vulnerable. Instead, simply state the facts: has muscular dystrophy, uses a wheelchair, is experiencing poverty, historically underrepresented. Additionally, avoid euphemisms for disabilities like challenged, differently abled, or specially abled.
- **Don’t underplay the impact of mental health conditions.** Terms like bipolar, OCD, and ADD are descriptors of real mental health conditions that people actually possess. They are not metaphors for everyday behaviors. Also, avoid derogatory terms that stem from the context of mental health, e.g., crazy, mad, or psycho.
- **“Guys” is not a gender-neutral term.** The “universal male” (i.e., using “guys” to mean “people”) assumes that the default human being is male. Although “he” and “man” are said to be neutral, [numerous studies](#) show that these words cause people specifically to think of males.

Some habits are hard to break. When trying to change a language pattern, it is easy to fall back into old habits, at least on occasion. See below for some quick language substitutions for common situations that might help, and please be open-minded (perhaps even grateful) when someone suggests that your language could be more inclusive. If you are unsure of the most appropriate terminology for the situation, simply ask—and then listen.

	More Inclusive	Less Inclusive
<i>When referring to a group of people</i>	Folks, people, you all, teammates, friends	Guys (or women) when referring to people overall
<i>When referring to staff</i>	Workforce, personnel, workers, team, colleagues	Manpower, man hours
<i>When referring to board leadership or facilitators</i>	Chairperson, chair, moderator, discussion leader	Chairman, foreman
<i>When referring to someone's significant other</i>	Spouse, partner	Wife, husband, boyfriend, girlfriend
<i>When describing norms</i>	Typical	Normal (There's bias inherent in using one group as a standard against which others are judged.)
<i>When referring to groups traditionally called "minority"</i>	Historically excluded groups, marginalized groups, or underrepresented groups	Minorities (Not all marginalized groups are minorities.) Vulnerable (implies there is something inherently wrong with them)

To further illustrate the important difference language choices can make, please consider the following examples of questions or comments that could take place during a site visit.

Less Inclusive	Concern	More Inclusive
Smithfield is a poor town with a lot of problems, but we want to help that community.	<i>Condescending; increases power dynamic</i>	We appreciate the important work you are doing for Smithfield and want to learn how we might be able to support your efforts.
Did other kids make fun of you for signing up for this mentoring program?	<i>Assumes that youth in that community are insensitive or don't value education</i>	What do you think other kids who are not involved in this mentoring program think about it?
Your location doesn't seem convenient/safe/etc. Why didn't you put it in XYZ location instead?	<i>Implies that you know more than the nonprofit about its community or area of expertise</i>	Why did you choose this location?
As a first-generation college student, have you inspired your family to place a higher value on education?	<i>Implies that the family did not value education highly before</i>	How, if at all, has your college experience affected your family and their feelings about higher education?