



2023 Application Survey Raw Data

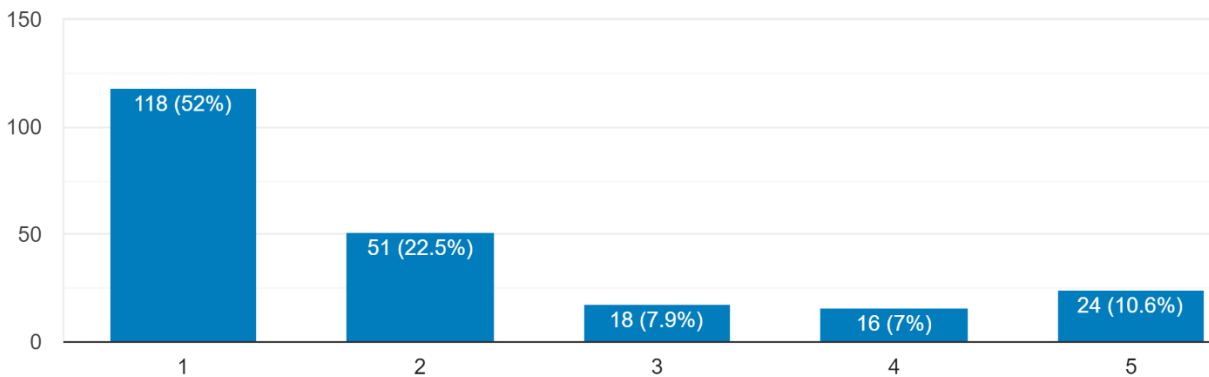
Survey responses collected April 1 – May 26, 2023

Total applicants invited to participate in survey: 284

Total respondents: 227

1. In the earliest stages of applying, how clear and useful did you find the grant program information on the Foundation’s website? (1 = extremely; 5 = not at all)

227 responses



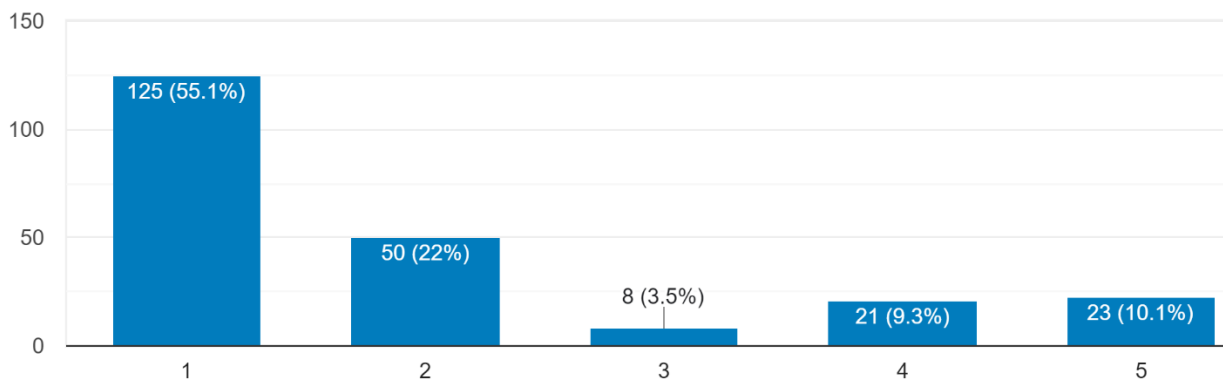
a bit confusing understanding how to make our application scalable for 3 years or 10 years
A development person on our team confused the 2022 Application Preview flyer with this year's grant because the LOI was submitted in 2022 as opposed to 2023.
Any advice specific to repeat applicants may have been helpful, perhaps.
Because I was not the originator of the grant, it is difficult for me to comment.
Cummings is one of the more straightforward and clear application processes. You give us the info we need right up front with no ambiguity.
Cummings process strikes a good balance between providing ample information and seeming like a daunting process. It's encouraging.
everything was fine
Everything was very clear.
I feel the timelines and expectations are clearly posted on the website.
I found the website to be informative and inspirational in reading about other non-profit grant recipients.
I found the website very clear, especially the timeline with dates. I even put the June 15th Celebration in my calendar as a hopeful "just-in-case" we receive the grant!
I love that the deadlines were clear.

I think more information on the connection between the 10-year grant and the primary grant that the proposal is for would be helpful (how they can be connected, etc.).
I thought the application process and timeline were extremely helpful.
If the Cummings Foundation prefers to direct funding away from nonprofits that have state or federal government funding, it would be good to state that clearly up front. Our nonprofit encountered that hesitancy from our fiscal reviewer after we had been invited and then completed the full application.
Information on the website is clear.
It was a little challenging to find where returning applicants could log in.
It was easy to get from the website to the application, and the instructions and the list of previous grant recipients and their projects were helpful to us.
It was great to see what we submitted in previous grants.
It was just a bit confusing as to who would be considered for a 10-year grant, and the process overall.
It would be helpful to have more guidance on what types of activities or issues or models or priorities the foundation prefers.
It would be helpful to have more specific direction on the kinds of programs Cummings is looking to fund on the website. In past years, programs that seemed quite similar to ours have been funded, while our program was not. We were never quite sure why that was.
N/A - the website was very helpful!
No comment
none
None
Not applicable
Super clear. Particularly liked the timeline!
The \$1m grant opportunity was a little ambiguous. The way it was worded could be interpreted as a one time grant for \$1m.
The application was very easy to follow.
The changes in the grant program from previous years and the timeline of the application process were outlined clearly.
The deadlines were especially helpful!
The Foundation's guidelines are very broad and a little vague, so I imagine it receives a lot of applications
The information for the LOI was very clear and easy to process.
The information on the website was very clear and transparent for the applicant, including giving areas and criteria, as well as previous funding recipients.
The information was pretty easy to understand

The instructions were clear but it was not clear how much one could apply for. Providing some examples like the one in the application would help.
The only difficulty was finding the link to access the application on the main website.
The only website and application was easy to navigate, clear to under and the expectations from us as applicants.
The website did a good job communicating all the different grant offerings, how to apply, who to reach out to and when.
The website made it clear, both at the LOI stage and via the actual full application, what was required. Also, apart from the website, I found Joyce to be exceptionally supportive and clear in answering the few questions that I did have. She was a pleasure.
There was some interpretation for the amount an Organization could apply for. This seemed to differ from about 2years ago. As a result, we requested less per year for a mulit-year disbursement.
This may be just me, but it is difficult to express the true impact of programs in such a brief summary
Very clear and great printable document of questions.
We found it very clear and easy to follow.
We have never been 100% clear on the process of distinguishing between a 3-year grant and a potential 10-year grant, but the issue was addressed and I think I understand the process and find it fair....
While the process is generally clear, I did have to write to the program officer to ask about the change in funding availability, namely the maximum amount to ask for and over what number of years.

2. How clear were the instructions and questions in the application itself? (A preview of the application is available here.)

227 responses



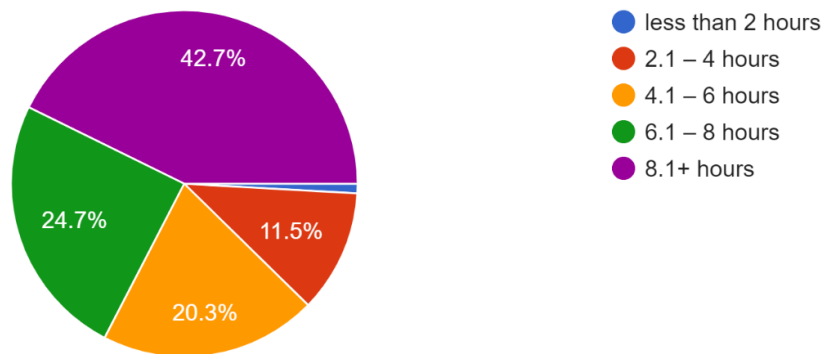
Again, very clear.
Also very clear! It was good to have a PDF that synthesized everything without needing to always log in to the portal.
Because I have been a part of Cummings Foundation Application Process for another company, I can say your process is friendly and efficient.
Could you allow just a few more characters for the name of the projects?
everything was clear
Examples of successful applications is always helpful
For the Balance Sheet, our Finance Dept explained to the grant writer that the equivalent "Statement of Financial Position" is contained within the audit and should not be separated from the document, because an audit is designed to be read in full context. Maybe next year you could request the Audited Financial Statement, or Balance Sheet for those organizations without a formal audit.
I applied for this grant via the grant portal. I somehow missed the linked document which would have been helpful - especially if I was a first time applicant. Not sure how I missed it?
I do not think it could be clearer.
I found the application questions to be very clear.
I found the youtube tutorial very helpful to supplement the instructions.
I referred to the guidelines and instructions throughout the process and found them very useful.
I thought the video regarding the budget was especially helpful!
In some cases, geographic information is not typically collected as many programs do not turn away people in need of a program based on their location.
It can often be challenging when application questions ask multiple questions within one question. For example the "plan for grant funds" question contains 5 separate questions. The larger character count did make it feasible to fit in an answer to all of the questions asked, which was helpful, but it can be clearer/easier when funders actually separate out the questions into different fields.
it fine and clear.
It is just a little confusing around the 10-year award
It's difficult to answer some questions that do not specifically relate to the nonprofit you work with. It would be helpful to have an "other" section more defined so that explanations could be easier to fit or a N/A would be an acceptable answer for all questions asked.
Just to note that in all the grant applications I have completed in the past I have never been asked about employee income verification and salaries
N/A - the questions were very straightforward and clear.
none
Not applicable

<p>Our Accountant interpreted that we could only request an amount based on the average of our three most recent consecutive filings. This resulted in not asking for the \$100K to be disbursed over 4 years at \$25K per year to support our program as we had requested in a previous application.</p>
<p>Our application experience was undoubtedly quite different from other groups, given that we had not even formed a corporation prior to applying, let alone established 501(c) standing with the IRS. My concern was that so many of the questions were not answerable in our case. But again, Joyce was always responsive, friendly and reassuring.</p>
<p>Our organizational structure and the multiple parties involved with our project did not fit well with the requested budget form.</p>
<p>Please specify more clearly exactly what kind of detail to which you are referring through the word "implementing".</p>
<p>Requested Annual Installment: Clarification on no greater than 20% of organization annual revenue. What if your organization's request is greater? What factors does the Cummings Foundation look at when this is the case.</p>
<p>See answer in #1 above</p>
<p>The annual installment request is a bit challenging to answer. The input field in the application form does not support different amounts for different years</p>
<p>The application was clear and thoughtful. One area that was slightly confusing were the budget requirements, but it was easy to get an answer.</p>
<p>The Budget form was a bit confusing but we called with questions and were assisted promptly</p>
<p>The Cummings Foundation application instructions are quite clear, the questions pertinent, and the format offers plenty of opportunities for creating a clear picture of our programs and our vision.</p>
<p>The grant officers were amazing at answering clarifying questions and quick with responses. Language on what to focus on when applying for a grant for a specific program versus when applying for general operating would be helpful.</p>
<p>The instructions and information requested was clear.</p>
<p>The previews that were provided outside of the submission page was very helpful. I used it to collaborate with my team based on the person who was best positioned to compile info for each part of the application. I then took this compiled info and easily submitted via your webpage portal.</p>
<p>The questions were quite clear and appropriate</p>
<p>The questions were very clear for the most part, especially the budget directions and questions, but I was not sure what was meant by regions and geographical locations in questions about who would be served.</p>
<p>There are some questions that seem like they might be redundant. Hard to know what is most important.</p>
<p>there were a few that seemed to overlap- but since the process happened several months back a little hard to remember</p>

Unusually clear in comparison with other foundations.
We appreciated being able to save our progress and return to it later.
We appreciated the guidance in how to respond to certain questions, such as responding with a 3-year grant in mind, but also having an opportunity to make a case for a 10-year.
We weren't entirely clear on the installment question, but received clarification quickly.
You might make it clear that you will obtain the 990 yourselves. I was curious why the application didn't ask for some of that info. Also specify how recent you'd like the balance sheet to be--I submitted one from 6/30/22 so it would tie to our last 990, and the reviewer asked for 12/31/22. Our situation is a little unusual, given that we (the nonprofit) primarily provide financial support for a municipal operation. Our expenses are largely grants to the town effort, and there wasn't a line for that (e.g. Grants paid out) on the budget template.
Your application is a good balance between what you need to know and the type and level of information that we are able to provide. It would be helpful if you could provide a Word version of the application since most of us work in that format then cut & paste into your online form.

3. Approximately how many staff hours were spent completing the full application?

227 responses



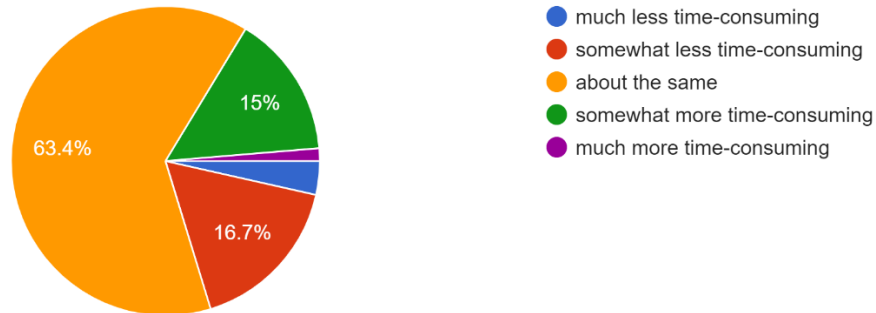
A lot of data gathering.
A lot! Due to the size and the opportunity funding would unlock, a huge amount of effort is put into the application including input from the Executive Director, Program Director and Development Director.
All the information you requested was totally reasonable! You allow for lengthier answers than many other foundations do, which can be helpful but which might encourage long-windedness. I noticed that the LOI allowed for a fairly robust explanation of the need for the program; I didn't feel that I needed that much extra space for a more elaborate explanation in the full application. Also, since your budget template includes very different line items than those in the Philanthropy MA template, it required quite a bit of extra time (although I can

absolutely see how knowing these budget details would be useful to the people reviewing proposals).
Application was clear and actually encouraged different parts of the organization to come together to craft answers
As with any grant application process, if there is an LOI and a full application, nonprofits appreciate if the two stage process means that there is a high likelihood of success for the full application. Hopefully the LOI stage whittles the applicants down to funding at least half of the remaining applications.
Because this application is high stakes - potential for a high level of support and visibility for the program - the application was drafted using input from multiple people in the organization.
Between the LOI and application it was about a days work. It would be helpful to have one short application for grants under a certain amount and a fuller one for larger, long term grants.
Definitely spent more than 8.1 hours.
Developing the multi-year budgets using the Cummings Foundation template took a fair amount of time.
I am answering this from my memory of the previous experience and not the Bethany grant application.
I am new to the organization, so this was among my first grant proposals!
I am sure this is more hours than normal, but I wanted to ensure we answered everything you asked clearly.
I appreciated the thoughtful and direct questions on the application.
I can't say that we kept track, but with revisions and editing, it took over 8 staff hours.
I dedicated more time then I typically would have for a grant with a similar application. But because of the amazing impact this grant would have on our organization I fussed over every word.
I don't think it was much over the 8 hours but we put a lot of time brainstorming and developing our proposal concept and what a multi year grant could do for the program.
I've never applied for such a large grant and wanted to be thorough
It does take a lot of time to complete the process that involves two different grant applications.
It may take us a little longer than some organizations because of our organizational structure. The application process is clear.
It was a very reasonable applicaiton
Less hours because we have applied to the Cummings Foundation grant in the past
My estimate is that it took about 20 staff hours to complete the full application. We had input from 3 additional staff members as well as the primary grant writer.
none

Not applicable
Our organization's is quite new to grant writing & management (especially with grants of this size); we began seriously pursuing around 2020 as a way for us to navigate the pandemic.
Seemed like a reasonable time commitment given the grant size.
Since we have applied several times in the past it made it less time consuming because questions were similar and we could copy paste sometimes.
Spent about 13 hours on the application
The amount of time was similar to other similarly-sized grant programs so not a burden. The two-step process is helpful to allow more detail and investment of time when there is a better chance of a successful outcome.
The application is a bit long, but we're happy to complete it.
The application is fairly in-depth, but understandably so for the process and amount of the gift.
The application questions were thoughtful and comprehensive. We appreciate the opportunity to provide a lot of context behind our request for funding.
The ED and a board member do this work, we have a very small staff
The foundation has done an admirable job of streamlining the application. Requests of this magnitude SHOULD take a reasonable number of staff hours to complete.
The program design/narrative took the majority of this time. The actual application was very user-friendly.
The time commitment was not an issue. We spent time on it because it mattered!
The total number of hours was approximately 15 because multiple people had to spend a small amount of time developing the budget and reviewing the narrative.
This is an important request that we wanted to make as strong as possible, which added some time to the review/revision process.
This was on us as we were without a finance manager at the time of application to pull financials and build program budget.
We are answering based on the question referring to completing the full application online using the software and not time spent in preparing the full grant application for submission.
we fine the process to long
We had to invest extra time in this application to show a 3-year budget plan
We spend a lot of time reviewing and revising to ensure accuracy and clarity.
We took a long time as a group to discuss the various elements, which was appropriate given the newness of our organization, but also helpful. The questions themselves provided a strong basis for us as we debated and made decisions about our mission statement, our goals, the projects we had in mind, our budget and other functions and features. There's no doubt in my mind that the application itself was instrumental in clarifying our direction.
We used multiple iterations of internal review before submitting

4. Compared with applications for similar-sized grants, how time-consuming did you find the Cummings application?

227 responses



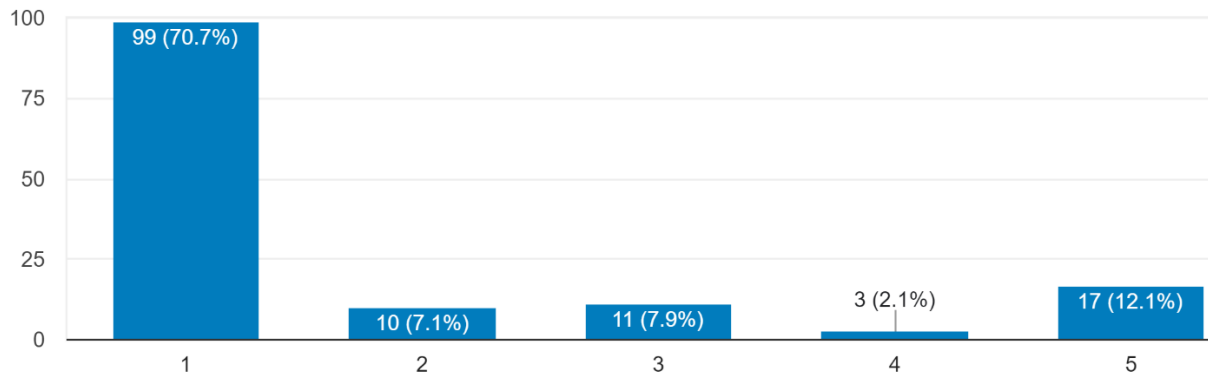
Although we put a lot of time into refining the narrative it ended up taking about as long as some other grant applications with more questions, specific attachments, etc.
Application was shorter than expected and questions were more streamlined / simpler
Because of our organization size and budget we typically do not qualify or would have a high probability of being awarded a grant of this size while competing against other larger organizations. Larger organizations would have more development staff or the resources to outsource professional grant writers. This is a wonderful unique opportunity.
Cummings is the largest grant we have applied for so I don't really have too much of a comparison.
For a grant of this size we typically include organizational leadership in the review, which expands the number of staff hours.
I actually don't have a clear memory of exactly how our process went, but I do remember commenting to a collaborator that I found the application relatively tractable.
I don't have enough experience in writing grants to answer this question, but because it is required, I put the middle answer.
I've applied for much smaller grants for other purposes that have required a great deal of time and documentation. I believe all questions were necessary.
In my opinion, the amount of time it takes to complete the application also depends on how often you have sought funding for a specific project. If it is the first time, it will take longer; if it's a program for which a number of funding applications have already been completed, then grant writers usually have a library of already-prepared answers from which to cut and paste.
It is important to be able to save as you go and come back to the application later.
It took us more time to fill out the grant applications in general because we were new to the process. In the past, we relied heavily on sponsorships, donations, and fundraising events.
Just more time consuming as the amount of information requested was more than others.
More time consuming because it is a significant amount of money over multiple years. It is not your process that made it more time consuming but the significance of it to the organization.

<p>My answer is not a great measurement of your grant application and time. I would really like to work with the Cummings Foundation and so we put in extra time. Additionally, as a new Executive Director with the [ORGANIZATION NAME REDACTED] I have not submitted many grants of this size, yet.</p>
<p>none</p>
<p>Not applicable</p>
<p>Not as time-consuming as Federal grants, which are much more time-consuming.</p>
<p>Nothing about the application other than noted above. This level of grant deserves a higher level of focus and time.</p>
<p>Our group as a whole, being nascent, had no prior experience in applying for grants. But that was not the case for me personally. My organization, [ORGANIZATION NAME REDACTED], has applied for and been awarded grants from non-profits, including the Gannett Foundation, and my own experience is that other charitable groups generally request less information than did the Cummings Foundation. Again, this was something we all considered a strength of the Cummings application in that its questions and requests were key to helping us sort out how we might best proceed.</p>
<p>Some foundations are changing their application process to a shorter simpler submission that does not overburden the grantee. Having an LOI and an application adds more work.</p>
<p>TBH there's aren't many grants that are similar sized. That's why we appreciate so much what you do and the scale of your contributions.</p>
<p>Technology has made many of these processes more efficient.</p>
<p>The Cummings Foundation grants are quite generous - and the application process very straight-forward.</p>
<p>The information requested in the Cummings Foundation application was all relevant information as opposed to most other grant applications that are too time-consuming for smaller non-profit organizations that have limited staff and often require less or non- relevant information.</p>
<p>The time commitment was not an issue. We spent time on it because it mattered!</p>
<p>This is a massive amount of money being given out. I would expect a more time-consuming application. I will say that the due dates for both the LOI and especially the final submission are scheduled in challenging times of the year.</p>
<p>This is an important grant to our organization. Much care and thought was put into the application. It gave us the opportunity to reflect on our goals, values and mission and to think creatively about our strategic plan. It allowed us to have fruitful conversations on how we want to move forward as an organization.</p>
<p>This was my first time applying for a grant of this size</p>
<p>We appreciate that the foundation understands the time and staff constraints facing many non profits, and this is reflected in the straight forward application.</p>
<p>We appreciate that there are not many attachments required.</p>
<p>we hope that all the information that was requiring was ok</p>

We submit very few applications of this size.

5. If you contacted Foundation staff with questions, how responsive and helpful were they? (Please skip this question if you did not contact staff.)

140 responses



Andrew Bishop is a joy to talk to. He is very supportive and helpful.

Andrew Bishop is always responsive!

Andrew Bishop was extremely responsive, patient with our questions and very helpful

Andrew Bishop was great!

Andrew Bishop was very helpful in clarifying how to best complete the application.

Andrew Bishop was very responsive every time I reached out.

Andrew is always responsive and helpful.

Andrew was incredibly helpful when I sent him a panicked email that something wouldn't attach. He was chill and personable and didn't make me feel like our application would get dinged because we asked for help!

Andrew was very responsive to any questions we had and got back to us very quickly.

Cummings Foundation staff are exceptionally responsive by both phone and email, often picking up their phone immediately or responding to email questions within hours. They are always accessible, transparent, warm and friendly. This is so very much appreciated!

Early on I had goofed something up. I called the office and got Andrew who helped me solve it fast. He was terrific.

Every question was answered promptly and clearly

Every staff member I spoke to went above and beyond in their willingness to help. A+

Foundation staff was quick and informative with a question we had regarding the application.

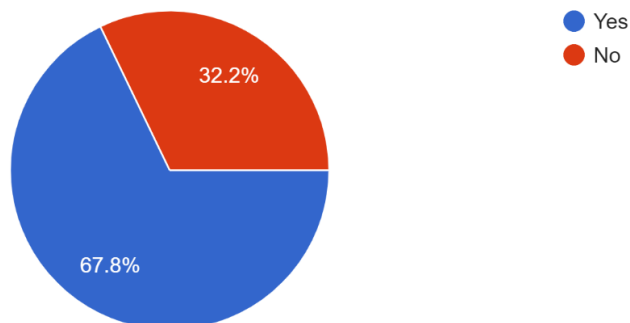
I am so grateful to everyone who answered the phone for me as I navigated my way through the process. Your time and generosity of knowledge and assistance was incredibly valuable.

I attended the webinar and also emailed any questions as they came up. The Foundation was very clear and helpful both in its written material and in answering my email questions.
I called at least once and found the conversation really helpful.
I called with a very clear and focused question and they were able to answer in a way that provided the information I needed while not giving me an advantage over others. Professional and fair to the process.
I did have to call staff and their response was timely and helpful
I did not contact the Foundation. I could not submit without answering this question.
I don't think we've contacted staff about this application, but they have been helpful with our questions about prior submissions.
I got a response within hours and staff was courteous
I had forgotten to note in the application itself that we could provide a Community Investment Tax Credit, but I was able to contact staff and let them know directly.
I have always had a wonderful experience working with the staff, they were very helpful, knowledgeable and friendly.
I have been applying for a few years and each time I call asking for feedback I have been met with friendly and helpful foundation staff, thank you!
I spoke with Andrew when I had a few questions. He was very helpful. Thank you!
I was very thankful to be able to speak to someone right away when I called. I have had difficulty trying to contact other grant managers. but not with Cummings.
I would call your office, then, Andrew would answer... every single time. Which I did probably 2 or 3 times. Wow to get a live person. The ability to have a conversation and ask questions BEFORE we submitted it was so valuable to us. If you read this Andrew... THANK YOU MAN!
It was so helpful and reassuring to have a human being answer the phone and have direct and helpful response to our questions regarding the registration process.
Joyce could not have been more helpful. She was always responsive, professional, friendly and informed. I can't imagine the foundation having a better representative.
My favorite answer was that they didn't want to lead us astray with their recommendations as the grants are now primarily reviewed by community volunteers. This was very helpful and honest!!!
My question was answered promptly and helped save me time
N/A
N/A
N/A
n/a
N/A (Cannot skip question as suggested, since it is marked required to respond to submit)
n/a, but it wouldn't let me skip this question
no

none
Not applicable
Not applicable
One of my board members spoke with the foundation a couple of times to clarify some items, he commented Very helpful!
Question #5 above does not allow you to skip it. Our organization had no contact with staff.
Question 5 is required; however, we did not contact Foundation staff.
Question not applicable
Staff answered our questions quickly and thoroughly. We believe that their response made our application stronger.
Staff member Andrew was willing to talk on the phone within short notice, very helpful.
Staff worked to clarify important questions about how best to understand eligibility requirements
Thank you Andrew Bishop for your prompt and courteous responses always!
The staff was fantastic and very helpful. Since this was my first time applying for a Grant I wanted to be sure I was answering correctly and did reach out on several occasions. Fantastic support!
The survey wouldn't let me skip this question, so I chose a neutral response.
They alleviated my fear of not putting the in the proper amount.
Very helpful and quick to respond.
We appreciated all the assistance by Cummings Foundation staff to help us stay on track with the reporting and subsequent application process.
We approached with a few questions but were directed back to the instructions.
We have contacted the Cummings staff on past applications and they were INCREDIBLY helpful and thoughtful.

6. Were you aware that the majority of all grant winners are decided by a diverse group of community volunteers, with no input from Foundation staff?

227 responses



decision-making process transparency: Are award decisions made on an individual basis (case by case) following a scoring rubric or do you also rely on volunteer reviewers' familiarity with local agencies? If latter, how is decision weighted?

I was not!

Community input is so valuable. Thank you for this process.

Community volunteers who have no personal or professional stake in funding decisions and represent different aspects of the communities served is an equitable approach that's appreciated.

Democracy at work!

Do they need a specific qualifications in order to decide the winners?

I admit to not being fully informed about all the components of the Cummings Foundation prior to applying for this grant. I did, however, learn a bit more about the involvement of this volunteer community during the time between our LOI submission and the full application. I found it reassuring that this separation existed. Of course, I also read about the role of the volunteers after our LOI was accepted.

I didn't know staff had no input, but I did know about the awesome volunteer engagement in the process

I find that to be an amazing method of selection.

I find this somewhat a challenge - I will share below!

I have been impressed by the professionalism and dedication exhibited by the volunteers who performed the site visit as well as the individual who spoke with me via phone.

I have participated in two site visits for our previous grant, and had the opportunity to meet some of the community volunteers who decide the grant winners. In speaking to them I was made aware that the volunteers decide the majority of grant recipients.

I knew read by volunteers- so we tried to write it so anyone with no experience with us could understand- we did think there was review by staff and some input but them

I knew that a group of community volunteers reviewed the grants but was unaware that the Foundation staff did not give input to the decision.

I knew that volunteers were involved but I did not understand that foundation staff did not provide any feedback...

I knew you used readers, but didn't realize the Foundation staff had no input.

I learned this from another grantee who also suggested writing the grant in clean plain English because the submission would largely be read by community members. We love the community decision-making. This was mentioned on the website but it's another factor that could be clearer.

I only found this out when contacted by a volunteer who was seeking clarification on part of the proposal.

I was not aware of that until I began the grant process

I've wondered in the past if the fact that the decisions are made by a group of community volunteers is why there seems to be so much variation year to year around which programs

<p>get funded. I also wonder how are these volunteers supported to understand the field of nonprofit work before they enter into the process of deciding on funding. Would Cummings ever consider a panel of previous grantees, or nonprofit professionals from organizations not applying for funding that year? That might help ensure that the panel really understands the field and the issues at hand without Cummings having to provide a lot of training/capacity building in advance of the process.</p>
<p>In preparation for the application I spoke with a previous recipient, and he told me about this review. I think it's an extraordinary approach to grant funding and I was very impressed!</p>
<p>Including community volunteers is a wonderful way to diversify and include varied perspectives.</p>
<p>Knew that volunteers had great input; was not aware the the staff did not participate in those decisions.</p>
<p>Love this. It is so awesome to have regular people come out to visit us to be a part of this process.</p>
<p>N/A</p>
<p>no</p>
<p>none</p>
<p>Not initially, though I learned that part way through the process.</p>
<p>Over the past few years, our organization has applied a number of times for consideration. We have extensively researched the incredible organization, process, and board.</p>
<p>Personally, I would be more comfortable with and trusting of decisions is they were made by a team comprised of community volunteers and others with more extensive grant assessment experience.</p>
<p>See #5. I very much appreciated staff being honest about this.</p>
<p>Thank you to the volunteers!</p>
<p>The decision-making process should include both, community volunteers and Foundation staff. Ideally it should be a participatory process that includes the voices of the community volunteers and foundation staff. Please read the following article https://learningforunders.candid.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/12/DecidingTogether_Final_20181002.pdf</p>
<p>The volunteers were thoughtful and engaging and from very diverse professional and personal backgrounds. It was enjoyable to see some volunteers from the last round, too!</p>
<p>There is nothing we enjoy more here at [ORGANIZATION NAME REDACTED] than having visitors 'in The House'. The Cummings' volunteers who visited us over the past two years were a pleasure -- knowledgeable, curious and insightful. We think it is a brilliant idea to have this group of community volunteers informing and guiding the grant process.</p>
<p>This does have implications for returning grantees, as they need to know to assume that grant evaluators will have no information about the organization, even if they have previously been funded, which is different from many other grant organizations.</p>
<p>This is a great idea to provide fresh eyes on missions.</p>

This is a terrific approach to funding decisions.
This is a wonderful aspect of the Cummings grant process.
This is wonderful to know
This makes the process interesting, in that it feels somewhat arbitrary. An unsuccessful application one year does not indicate that the project or org are not a fit for the funder (as is usually the case), but that the particular group of volunteers did not connect with the org. But it will be a different group of readers in another year.
Very glad to hear that.
We appreciated the opportunity to engage with leaders from different organizations and their questions/comments about our work.
We love your volunteers and your process.
We were contacted shortly after submission with a question from one of the volunteers; the email exchange was cordial and clear and I got the sense that the additional information provided satisfied the concerns/questions raised (e.g. a very thoughtful and thorough review was clearly in place with highly engaged folks). I was impressed with the prompt turnaround--- I've come to expect reviews to take months and months without any contact or word so even though we were asked to clarify some financial questions, it was heartening that our proposal was being reviewed shortly after submission.
While I admire the concept and participation of diverse community volunteers, I think that the system is more difficult for the nonprofits that are applying. There is no way to build knowledge about the type of work an organization is undertaking, nor any way to correct misconceptions about that work if you are denied and choose to apply again in the future.

7. Please share your recommendations, if any, to make the application process or the application itself more accessible, equitable, or inclusive.

A number of staff members have grant-writing experience. I can imagine that the process might be intimidating for an staff member or organization with less experience with major grants. I don't know if you already do something like this idea: Since Cummings Foundation staff remains neutral in the application process, perhaps an outside group (ECCF maybe) could be a resource.
advertising the opportunity to a wider circle; allow the option to send video or taped interviews or presentations as applications instead of just the written version
As an organization that does not have a formal grant writer, providing grant writing tips or training through a webinar could be very helpful. This training could also offer an insider view of what matters most in the articulation of impact outcomes and measures and the community decision making process.
Awareness of limitations of LEAN non-profits... limited full-time staffs/remote work has been overwhelming for all!

Completing your unique budget form can be a burden for organizations to reconfigure their budgets to fit.

Cummings issues an open call for applications. If you are interested in greater equity and inclusion, perhaps you should think about issuing a separate call, or creating a separate equal size award, specifically for BIPOC-led organizations. Similarly, you could take steps to actively recruit BIPOC community volunteers to publicize and review the proposals.

Describing a 3-year initiative vs a 10-year initiative can include different variables. It was difficult to propose annual costs, not knowing the extent or possibility of the full funding and timeline.

ensure winners reflect diversity of neighborhoods and organizational leadership

Found it to be very user friendly.

Foundations can use their influence by requesting organizations to provide detailed information about the demographics of their staff compared to the demographics of who they serve in addition to specific information about how they are engaging in inclusion work.

Given the number and diversity of applications that Cummings receives, would it make sense to have slightly different "weight classes" for different sorts of organizations? For example, a newer and smaller organization could have a smaller and more targeted application than a larger, more mature organization.

Good. I had a problem with the access to the application just once because the security certificate had expired. However the staff was very responsive and provided alternate ways to access the application.

Have separate procedures for sustaining grants and smaller grant programs.

Having community volunteers reviewing the application , I assume that that there is quite a lot of subjectivity in decision making. For example - previous feedback about my organizations' application has been quite different - one member saying that it is too geographically focused and then another saying that I need to broaden my scope into other geographically areas, it can be confusing knowing what the 'reviewers' are looking for.

My only intention when writing grants is to share that we are a reputable organization, with strong ethics, strong values and healthy outcomes for the people we serve - we have tried yet failed many times to successfully be awarded a grant from Cummings and each year I am at a loss of what the foundation is looking for - guidance on this would be amazing!

help the organization they really need they own grant to be approved

I am sue that this process and the needs of the community is very difficult for your community

I appreciated you asked about number of employees as we are small.

I can't think of any recommendations at this time.

I do think it would be helpful to emphasize that the grant reviewers are new each year and not part of the organization, as the applicants should be entering basic information about their organization even if they have an existing relationship. As a grant writer, I do appreciate the generous character counts for responses, which allows an applicant to provide the information without a laborious amount of editing to keep under short character counts.

I don't have any recommendations, just appreciation for the ease of the application process.
I don't have any recommendations.
I have no recommendations.
I have none at this time.
I love the online format, it is user friendly and well organized. Not sure how it could be more inclusive or equitable
I personally found the application and process accessible but I do not need any accommodation or modification. I have high speed internet at home, access to a public library, and access to free and paid resources for grant writing.
I really appreciate the opportunity for a small organization like ours to submit for this grant. There are often size restrictions (i.e. high annual revenue) for organizations to submit for grants that sometimes unnecessarily eliminate the opportunity for smaller organizations to share our stories and try and compete for resources that would serve as a game-changer and result in greater impacts.
I suggest that Cummings use a panel of nonprofit managers/leaders with experience in a variety of issue areas as the people who make funding recommendations. These people should be compensated in some way for their time - although the compensation could be relatively small stipend. There are other funders who use this format such as EdVestors and the Massachusetts Cultural Council's YouthReach program.
Also, provide ways that programs can demonstrate their quality outside of writing answers to narrative questions. Not all great programs can afford great grantwriters, or have someone on staff who is a good writer. You could ask for links to videos, press on the organization, or other demonstrations of quality work that the org has already created.
Some funders are also using video interviews as part of the application process now, which is supportive of organizations who can speak in depth about their work, but not necessarily have the capacity to put those ideas in writing.
I think it was a fairly accessible application process.
I think it's already quite well done. The video on the financial side is extremely helpful.
I think that the budget template is an area to explore. You could invite organizations to submit their budgets in whatever format they typically use to reduce the burden on the applicants.
I thought it was well thought out, so I don't have any recommendation
I was expecting you to get in touch with us, take a tour or at least have a conversation in person with us in our studio, know better what we do then decide the next steps. Just let me know! Thank you! :)
I was pleased with the process and wish I was aware of the grant sooner, but I think that is the fault of our agency
I would hope that the volunteer visitors are able to 'weigh in' on their agencies' application consideration by the grant committee.

I would make sure that all of the questions are really "necessary" for the review process and streamline as much as possible for future applications. I do think word limits force you to be concise and think about what is really needed to include in the answers.
I'm not sure
If looking for best practices, we are always extremely impressed by the equity practices in grant making by Lenny Zakim Fund and this year the United Way did a special round specially to improve their equity practices in grant making and their process was very well thought out.
If there is a scoring matrix, it is helpful to be able to see that while developing the proposal.
In addition to awaiting organizations to find you and apply, it might be helpful to take note of organizations that are doing great things and reaching out to see if aligned with your mission and invite them to apply.
In case you are not already doing so, it would make sense to target orgs that would be a good fit from a racial equity perspective but may need additional lead time or counseling to prepare a strong application, reaching out to these orgs significantly earlier than the LOI period so that there is time to prepare.
It is very straightforward and practical. Thank you!
It is wonderful (and rare, in our experience) that you are doing this survey to collect feedback on this topic. It is so key to understanding accessibility and diversity.
It may be reassuring to know more about the training that volunteers undergo to prepare them for the responsibility of evaluating the applications.
It might be helpful to know more about the process of presentations. Are those that are asked to give presentations "finalists" or if one is not asked, are they still being considered for a grant? Perhaps an example in the grant timeline explanation would be helpful here.
It was a great experience for us; overall it was quite intimate which made us feel very comfortable with applying. Additionally, staff were super responsive and very helpful. Overall, a great process!
It was clear and straightforward. Thank you
It was intuitive and clear. You all don't need any suggestions from me!
Many individuals are intimidated by the process and think they don't have the skills to complete it. I think it would be a great idea to have winners help future applicants by identifying potential applicants in their community to apply. Secondly have those winners offer time to help future applicants go through the process to apply. I think it would build confidence and help expand the pool of applicants which helps to make the process more accessible, equitable and inclusive.
More about the timeline for when to expect site visit volunteers to reach out would be helpful. It may have been communicated in email, but listing it on the website with the other phases would help organizations plan ahead.
N/A
n/a
n/a

N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
NA
No recommendations to offer.
No recommendations! It was a smooth process and a clear application.
No recommendations. The process is quite good.
none
none
none
None
None
None at this time, thank you.
None except for #1 answer, it is a great and much appreciated process!!
Nothing I can offer would improve your already well thought out procedure.
Perhaps consolidate to one application and try not to have so much time elapse between writing the grant and program funding. Most philanthropic organizations have shorter periods.
Perhaps make available in other languages
Please ask for the financial information you would like to receive rather than prescribing the format you want it in.
Please keep doing what you're doing!
Please provide the opportunity for potential grantees to meet with Cummings staff to better understand its funding priorities and decision making process. These meetings are incredibly helpful in understanding how to craft an application that will be well received and to understand the audience (for example, we know nothing about who is reading and considering our request and what level of training or understanding they have about our cause area). Additionally, factoring in some kind of meeting helps to create equity, because some organizations do not have a tremendous amount of capacity or skill to write long applications, which can often be conveyed through a conversation. This would help build equity for more grassroots organizations and also help to build relationships. Relatedly, when organizations are not chosen, a process for feedback back to that organization to understand why it is not chosen would be so helpful. Without that feedback or insight, we don't know what to do differently or how to better frame our request.
see comment to 6, above
Small and medium sized charities be included in this decision making process.

<p>So far, this process has been rewarding within itself. No current recommendations.</p>
<p>Some applications have included the option of turning in audio answers instead of written - I really love that. Also, Wellington Fdn and some other big ones have said things like "Feel free to send us a similar grant that you have written for other foundations" - this is incredibly helpful especially for the small scrappy organizations that you all fund in your 100 for 100 - it saves hours for those of us that only have 1 development person, not a whole team!</p>
<p>Sometimes questions with character limits cannot sufficiently capture the work that small, grassroots organizations do. It would be helpful to have alternate ways of sharing our work, like through video testimonials, short film reels, or through interviews with community volunteers that work with the Cummings Foundation. For organizations without in-house grant writers, this may be a more effective way of demonstrating the great work being done in less resources organizations.</p>
<p>Still hard that those of us in small orgs with no professional help are reviewed the same as those with orgs that have professional help in writing applications- they have an obvious leg up on us- not really sure how to address but it is still very unbalanced especially if this reviewed only by volunteers who have no way of weighing this kind of information</p>
<p>The application and process are fairly straightforward, though the budget guidance might be a little clearer as we weren't sure how much we should ask for (the RFP mentioned \$50K as an average annual award amount, but it seems you could ask for more than that?). It might also be helpful to allow more text to explain why an applicant should be considered for the 10 year award, though I realize there is time to make that case after the initial application.</p>
<p>The application process is clear and straightforward and application is very accessible and equitable.</p>
<p>The application process seems to be fair and well managed. Effective communication enables recipients of grant funds to stay informed of the process and the progress.</p>
<p>The application process was straightforward and information easy to locate on the website for all. The timeline from letter of inquiry submission to grant award is quite long (July-May/June). Perhaps the timeline is directly related to the # of applicants and time needed for review. A shorter timeline would certainly be helpful for grant awardees as funding could make an impact sooner in communities without the lengthy wait.</p>
<p>The application was easy to access</p>
<p>The Budget item is probably the most confusing. Perhaps the blurb about when you need to do 1 year versus the 3 years would be a nice addition to the spreadsheet.</p>
<p>The grant application is computer friendly, which is lovely for many organizations. But for some organizations needing funding, technology, and computer literacy is not easily accessible, so an option to apply via mail might make the process more accessible.</p>
<p>The process and application worked well for us, though please see recommendations in number 8 below. If addressed, these could help mitigate stress for nonprofit development staff and help promote their well-being.</p>
<p>The video you provided about the budget form was very helpful. Additional explanatory videos of this type might be helpful for both new and experienced grant writers and people who are visual learners rather than learning from written documents. .</p>

There are several ways to make the grant application process more accessible, equitable, and inclusive, particularly to address the disparities faced by Black or Brown led organizations in accessing funding. Here are some recommendations:

Simplify the application process: Many grant applications are overly complex and require a significant amount of time and resources to complete, which can be a barrier for organizations led by people of color. Funders should simplify their application process and make it easier to understand, reducing the burden on applicants.

Provide technical assistance: Many Black or Brown led organizations may not have the resources or knowledge to navigate the grant application process effectively. Funders should provide technical assistance to these organizations, including workshops, webinars, or one-on-one coaching, to help them build their capacity and increase their chances of success.

Diversify funding sources: Many foundations and donors have historically focused on supporting established organizations led by white leaders, which perpetuates disparities in funding. Funders should seek out and support diverse organizations led by people of color, and encourage other funders to do the same.

Address unconscious bias: Unconscious biases can impact the grant application process, particularly in the selection of grant recipients. Funders should undergo training to recognize and address their own biases, and implement strategies to minimize their impact on the selection process.

Use data to inform decision-making: Funders should collect and analyze data on their grant-making practices, including the demographics of their grantees and the success rates of organizations led by people of color. This data can help identify disparities and inform strategies to address them.

Engage with communities: Funders should engage with the communities they aim to support, including people of color, to better understand their needs and priorities. This can help funders tailor their grant-making strategies and ensure that they are meeting the needs of diverse communities.

Overall, these recommendations can help to make the grant application process more accessible, equitable, and inclusive, ensuring that Black or Brown led organizations receive the same amount of funding as their counterparts doing the same work

This is a difficult question to answer. I found both the process and application itself to be quite accessible, and it was also clear that equitability and inclusivity were priorities.

This question is hard to answer because I was notified by 4 different sources that these funds were available.

visits to organizations that have applied multiple times and recieved no award . no feedback from the grant committee is very discouraging.

We are thrilled to have made it to the second round of consideration for a Cummings Grant. In our past years, we have not made it past the LOI due to I suspect the geographic information. Considering the impact of a Cummings Grant I do feel it is important to be flexible and open to expanding markets of support in MA.

We at [ORGANIZATION NAME REDACTED] think that smaller organizations and organizations who employ non-native speakers of English or people of color are at a disadvantage generally when it comes to writing grants. Lack of resources to pay grant writers, lack of experience in grant writing, and also not being a native English speaker sometimes get in the way, so even when the mission is important and the organization is doing fantastic work, the application does not always hold up well compared to an organization that is bigger, better financed and has a team of professional grant writers (we use volunteers). So I would just ask the evaluators to bear that in mind and give a smaller and/or POC led organization that chance to receive financial support that could be transformative. To really look past the printed page and consider the impact that the funding would make to an underserved community. Perhaps in some cases an interview or site visit would be appropriate. Another idea is to have a capacity building grant to help these organizations.

We can find nothing to recommend or improve upon.

We received the invite from newsletters, not sure how and where else you publicize it.

We think your process is very inclusive.

8. Bearing in mind that some level of due diligence is required to be good stewards of Cummings Foundation's funds, please share your recommendations, if any, to make the application process or the application itself easier or less time-consuming for nonprofits.

Accepting organizations own Board Approved budgets would be helpful. Though it's understandable that you would prefer uniform budget documentation for community volunteers to more-readily compare among organizations.

Again, this is a tough question to answer. Given our experience, I'm not sure that I see a great deal of value to making the process easier or less time-consuming. It shouldn't be easy. It shouldn't be quick. My opinion. In our case the challenges of applying were quite beneficial to us. The questions forced us to think hard about what we wanted to do and how. However, I can see that other groups might not feel this way. We have a strong and committed organization and were happy to spend the time thinking through our approach.

All good thank you

Application is very thorough and provides good opportunity for organization to present its purpose, strengthens, vision for growth

As a first-time applicant, I found this process very easy-to-understand.

As a new leader to my organization I found the process straightforward and am hopeful to join the ranks of Cummings Foundation partners.

As much as possible use questions that have a similar format as other funders so we can use relevant text that is already written. Many MA based nonprofits have a boilerplate grant that is updated every few months that is based on the PhilanthropyMA narrative format. Equally most nonprofits have budgets that are set up using the PhilanthropyMA format. Being able to make small tweaks to already created document is a huge time saver.

As someone who applies for educational grants in a university, overall I think the application process is fair.

Asking for slightly more detail during the LOI phase and inviting fewer applicants to proceed from LOI to full application would potentially save many applicants' time.

Awareness of limitations of LEAN non-profits...

Consider accepting the common app, which is widely used by many foundations. It saves us time because we often already have something drafted that we can update or re-use. I would rather have the opportunity for a 30-60 min conversation with the foundation than spend 8 hours re-working my content to fit a different set of questions and parameters.

Consider sending this survey out as part of the confirmation letter once the grant is submitted. We go through so many Grant processes that it can be difficult to capture our true experience so many months later.

Consider shortening the application to award timeline

Continue to shorten the application and consider a short and longer version depending on grant size rather than an LOI and full grant. Put word limits on questions so that applicants can be concise. Offer grant writing support or training/best practice tips.

Even though it was a lot of work, we appreciated the thoroughness of the application process.

Expectations were clear, as were instructions for completion. The application was straightforward.

Filling out the required budget form for ANY grant is always one of the most confusing parts of the grant writing process for me. I thought the Cummings Foundation did a fantastic job of including a video with FAQs.

For a grant of this size, the time commitment was appropriate. The portal was easy to use and the staff was responsive and professional.

For those who are reapplying it might be helpful to have a feature where you can import information from a previous application that hasn't changed

Given the amount of the grant and the need for oversight I feel that the process and time commitments are well with reason.

Having an idea of funding priorities would be amazing such as affordable housing, food security, homeless prevention (obviously these are skewed to the health and human services field in which our non-profit sits!). Also having an idea of how many organizations under each priority area are going to be funded helps too. For example, we are multi-faceted so if I was applying for a specific program, I would be able to align our application to an area that I believe had the best chance of success. I hope this helps and I am happy to provide as much feedback as you'd like!

I am not sure it should be less time-consuming. Cummings is making a major investment in our organization. Such investment requires a thoughtful response

I can't think of any. We spent the additional time on the application as we think it offers a unique and awesome opportunity for our children

I can't think of any way to make this very important decision you are making any easier through this application process.

I did not find the application itself or the process to be overly burdensome or time consuming. The questions were direct enough that we could respond thoroughly and feel like we were addressing what you were asking, but high-level enough that our responses were authentic to our work and vision. I also appreciate that the questions did not have overly restrictive character limits, which can make crafting comprehensive responses to big questions challenging.

I do feel the application is very user friendly and the amount of work one has to invest in telling the organization's story is reasonable.

I do not have any recommendations to make the application easier, or less time consuming. I felt the questions asked were concise and all necessary to provide the information needed to make an informed decision on grant recipients.

I do not see a need to amend or revise the application process. It appears to be rather straight forward and does not request any frivolous information. Volunteers are well informed regarding the operations of the nonprofit and prepared for the conversation.

I don't feel like this is an onerous process, especially given the size of the awards.

I don't have any concrete recommendations. The time is in crafting the project and making the best case for support. That takes time.

I feel it is already a streamlined process.

I feel that all of the questions asked on the application are relevant ones. There is less repetition of questions than in many grants where the same question is asked multiple times. The budget form was also user-friendly and the accompanying video clear and helpful.

I feel that the amount of information and time required to complete the process were appropriate.

I felt that everything asked in the application and the information requested from our organization was necessary for the Foundation to make an informed decision. I am not sure there are many adjustments that could be made to make it less time-consuming.

I found it to be a well planned application and the communication from the team was appreciated

I found the application to be more than fair and flexible. The application, as designed, seems to be a very good vehicle to allow for different approaches to providing program content.

I honestly don't know if the process could, or should, be any easier. In order for the volunteer grant committee to make careful, informed decisions, it needs to have an understanding of the communities and the agencies involved in the process. Short of all the volunteers visiting all of the applicants, the applications need to be detailed enough to bring the program(s) to life for the readers.

I think it was a very straightforward process.
I think the length was reasonable given the size of the grants being offered
I think the level of commitment the Cummings Foundation provides to the orgs it funds warrants the level of information requested in the application.
I thought it was very reasonable, though the budget form was a bit onerous. Many aspects to break down
I thought that the application process was appropriate.
I was unaware that the grant can only be given to nonprofits that are under the IRS category as a "public charity". I applied, but my organization is a "private foundation", so we are not eligible. That information could/should be provided at the beginning of the application process.
I wish more foundations accepted applications, so many don't. It makes Cummings a diamond in the philanthropy rough
I wonder if a simplified application might be viable for absolute organizations
I would suggest to Cummings Foundation, and others, that providing a preview of questions in a Word document, rather than a PDF, would be very helpful. This would save bidders the step of having to copy and paste the questions into a Word document to draft responses. Thank you.
I've filled out countless grant applications and feel this one is very streamlined and straightforward.
If I were the foundation, I would make the LOI more detailed (so you can weed more applicants out at that stage). Since the proposal is read by volunteers, it makes sense that it's long so that we can explain everything.
If this does not already happen, I think that Cummings Foundation staff should review the decisions of the volunteer reviewers to ensure that the assumptions driving the decision (either positive or negative) are accurate and valid.
Just my previous comments. Thank you!
Look to the finances of the charity. Will the funds secured from Cummings be used for the requested exempt purpose of the organization? Does this organization have a reputation of maximizing the Cummings Foundation grant for that stated purpose? Are they good stewards of all monies received by them? If I can trust you in the little things, I can trust you in the bigger ones.
Maybe a three-step process would be beneficial: a letter of intent, a more narrative application, and then a more detailed, so that the third round has a higher likelihood of acceptance, and thus merits the extra time to complete.
Maybe for some people having a free class on grant writing could be helpful. Or maybe recommendations of grant writing books that can be accessed for free at a public library.
More clarity on what your metrics are for a winning application.

More guidance on the media release would be helpful, for grantees who aren't familiar with that type of promotion and for any organization who would like to plan ahead on promoting their award.
Most of the questions are standard for proposals we prepare for other funders.
n/a
n/a
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
n/a
NA
na

9. Please share any additional feedback, suggestions, or thoughts you have for Cummings Foundation.

Thanks for your generous contribution to non-profits, especially to those of us with small budgets and big dreams
Appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback!
As I note above, I really am not an experienced grant writer. For this reason, I do not have any recommendations in the open ended answers. I found your instructions to be very helpful and was able to break down the task by asking relevant staff members for needed information (for instance, the CFO for financial information).
As soon as we filed our application we started to receive rental information from the Cummings commercial side. I found it odd that they had information that we had applied for a grant and then started to solicit us.
As we have been an organization which has supported the community and young people as stakeholders since 1989, without any interruption in service (even during COVID-19), it is my hope the Cummings Foundation sees the value proposition of the mission and program of [ORGANIZATION NAME REDACTED] since 1989 (34 years this year).
Carry On!
Cummings Foundation communications have been very informative and helpful in raising awareness of other foundation's activities.
Cummings Foundation is a tremendous provider of local grants and we look forward to applying every year. Please keep up the great work!
Cummings Foundation provided very clear expectations and a useful timeline of all the stages of the grant process. No improvements to suggest. Thank you !

Cummings has such a big name in giving. Is there any way Cummings could expand its outreach by providing mentoring and coaching to certain newer, smaller organizations?

Encouraging former Cummings Foundation winners to act a resource to future applicants may help in a few ways. It would expand the pool of applicants and provides a boost of confidence and assistance to an applicant who is doubting their ability to complete the application process. I correlate it to someone holding office hours where there is a time and place that folks can check in with someone. This help could be promoted months in advance of LOI to help advance those who need a little extra to apply.

Evaluation of program success is sometimes tricky for nonprofit programs where outcomes are more qualitative than quantitative. If Cummings could share how other nonprofits evaluate their program goals effectively, that would be helpful.

General operating funding is what is most needed and should be the focus on any modern foundation seeking to have a broad impact on diverse organizations

I appreciate the clear thought and intention that went into this grant application process. Thank you for your time reviewing all 284 applications!

I appreciate the support that is available throughout the process.

I had to call a few times (three maybe?) and each time was answered thoroughly and with what felt like a great deal of care and concern. this is a game-changer for us and the person on the other end of the line acted that way. thank you.

I personally love your award-making process, and your volunteer site visits. You are an amazing Foundation and partner, and we appreciate you!

I think you run a really innovative process and I love that you engage community volunteers so deeply.

I truly appreciate what you do. Thanks for giving all of us and our programs the opportunity to grow and succeed

I'd like to know what types of marketing opportunities Cummings is most interested in with regards to partnering with our nonprofit now that we are grant recipients. Events? PR and press releases? Speaker opportunities? Interviews with Cummings leadership on LinkedIn? How can we best promote our partnership in a way that is meaningful to Cummings? Are any members of leadership at Cummings interested in exploring a role on our Board at [ORGANIZATION NAME REDACTED]? Thanks!

Impressive process. No recommendations.

In general, this application was easy to navigate and was not daunting as much of the information was included in the LOI. It would be nice to have a shorter application, but then it is hard to get everything in that you want to say. All in all it was quite good and easy to complete.

In the past Cummings has prioritized certain communities where they do more business over others. It may be worth looking at whether you can add a few more grants outside those specific geographic areas in MA. For example our town Waltham has many worthy nonprofits. Overall the Cummings Foundation does an outstanding job, thank you!

It is wonderful to have a community jury and engage in the process in a way that is not overly "jargony".
It was a very good experience
It would be helpful if we had Cummings' grading metrics that could help us guide if we are a good fit for the foundation. As a small organization with less than a full-time grantwriter with limited development experience, more specific questions that can guide us the information you need would also be helpful.
Just to communicate our gratitude for supporting so many nonprofits in an equitable way.
Keep it up Cummings. We the nonprofits love you. We also hope we get the grant again... fingers crossed!
Keep up the amazing work!
Look forward to hearing back!
Love seeing the diversity of grant awards! Thank you!
Maybe shorten the length of time when you find out if you are awarded the grant from the time you submitted your application.
N/A
N/A
NA
none
none
None
None
None. Thank you for such a clear and accessible process!
Only how much we appreciate the opportunity and the wonderful generosity of the Cummings!!!
Our organization is deeply grateful for the opportunity to apply for a grant from the Cummings Foundation! The process helped us assess our mission and how we engage with the community... which will help us moving forward. Thank you!
Overall, the Cummings Foundation application certainly is a more time consuming especially for smaller charities with little or no paid employees. That said, they may provide a more efficient way to obtain the requested change or need to be addressed.
Please commend your volunteers for their passion and professionalism. It is heartwarming to experience their genuine interest in the mission and goals of the organization.
Please keep up the good works!
Proud to be associated with Cummings and look forward to finding more Grant opportunities and classes going forward.
See above

Several other grants use the same grant software platform. Cummings by far has made use of the platform very user friendly. Information is easily found & clearly marked out. Easy of use is 10 out of 10. I appreciate applying for grants and final reports because I know ahead of time how smooth the process will be and that Cummings Foundation staff are responsive if we run into a roadblock. Thank you for making the grant process easy and efficient for applicants!

Thank you for all that you do!

Thank you for all that you do.

Thank you for all you do in the community each year!

THANK YOU for all you do to invest in our communities!

Thank you for all you do to invest in our community. Have you ever considered a partnership with UpMetrics to support grantees improving their story telling and metrics? It could be an interesting option.

Thank you for asking for feedback

Thank you for doing a survey and for your efforts make the application more accessible, equitable and inclusive.

Thank you for doing so much for the nonprofit sector that serves communities in need.

Thank you for gathering feedback on the application process. It is deeply appreciated when funders want to partner with organizations to improve the process on both sides, so we can spend more time serving our communities.

Thank you for including the video about the budget instructions; we did have a little confusion about how best to complete it however, due to the structure of the proposed program and how it fits into the greater organizational structure.

Thanks to the Cummings Foundation for the opportunity to apply--and for multi-year programs as well. I eagerly await proposal decisions and so hopeful that our proposal will be awarded!

Thank you for providing this opportunity to give feedback!

Thank you for support of many worthy organizations in our community. I found the application process to be professionally done, robust in information requested, and still manageable from a charity's perspective.

Thank you for supporting Massachusetts nonprofits!

Thank you for the incredible generosity of the Cummings Foundation - so appreciative for all you do for our community

Thank you for the opportunity

Thank you for the opportunity to submit for a grant and for this survey as well.

Thank you for the opportunity!

Thank you for the opportunity.

Thank you for what you do for the Community. We see your work everywhere

Thank you for your consideration!

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Thank you for your continued support and kind consideration.
Thank you for your exceptional generosity and care.
Thank you for your generosity to our community and your support.
Thank you so much for this opportunity!
Thank you so much for your wonderful work!!!
Thank you so much!!
Thank you to the Cummings Foundation for supporting so many non profits in Massachusetts, many of whom serve our most vulnerable populations. The grant awards make a significant difference and positive impact in our communities. Very grateful for Bill and Joyce Cummings' philanthropy and example to all to give back to their communities.
Thank you very much for the work that you do to support non profits with the acceleration of their missions. We were very pleased with the experience and are happy we applied!
Thank you!
Thank you!
thank you. As a grant reviewer for different agencies, I know that the reviewing process can be complex and time-consuming. Thank you for your efforts to review each proposal on its own merits and alignment with Cummings Foundation goals.
Thanks so much, [NAME REDACTED], Director of Development, [ORGANIZATION NAME REDACTED]
The budget is normally the most time consuming process in terms - I appreciated that the Foundation had a tutorial and defined terms for how/what categories were that were in the budget form.
The Cummings Foundation is a beacon of hope for many organizations in the area and we are extremely grateful for all the funds that you invest back into the community to make the greater Boston area a better place. By doing that you are advancing equity for all peoples.
The enormous financial commitment the Cummings Foundation to do good in the community is admirable. Thank you for all you do, including asking for this feedback.
The level that Cummings Foundation funds at is amazing for the field. But it often feels hard to understand how to get the funds or why certain organizations get funded and others not. More transparency is always helpful. For example, sharing who is on the volunteer committee making decisions.
This application process takes into account the administrative burden that non-profits carry. It is clear and concise and it allows the applicant to paint a full picture of their work. Thank you!
to wait
Truly love your values system of giving away as much money as possible. And loving all the local colleges and universities you're supporting that don't usually get the same love as the Harvards of the world...you all look out for the legit authentic scrappy folks trying to break through!

Very impressed with how thorough the process is and how responsive Cummings is to questions. Appreciate that you seek feedback and ways to improve the process. Thank you for this opportunity both to apply and to offer feedback.

We appreciate the effort foundation staff invest in improving/refining the process. Thank you.

We appreciate the Foundation's prior support and this amazing opportunity for revenue to help sustain our impact.

We appreciate the opportunity for multi-year funding especially for general operating support. Only concern as an organization that is in a moment of significant growth, that proving grant amount need based on past financials feels limiting and wondering if there could be more factors/indicators for grant amount.

We appreciated the high character limit in the full proposal. Often times, many hours are spent trying to reduce responses and cut critical information just to fit in a word / character count.

Thank you for your time in reviewing our proposal!

We are awed and grateful for all Cummings Foundation does for the community, for our nonprofit, and for the truly unique and democratic way the Foundation operates.

We are grateful for the opportunity to apply!

We are grateful for your ongoing commitment to the community.

We are looking forward to the results!

We are proud to be recipients of Cummings Foundation Funding and are thrilled to inform the community of this relationship.

We are thankful for your generosity.

We definitely appreciate the opportunity to be considered!

We enjoyed meeting the volunteers on the site visits.

We look forward to meeting with the staff during site visits. Since they are all volunteers, it shows that they are passionate about their role and eager to learn more about the organization. It is always a great experience.

We really appreciate Cummings seeking this feedback. It shows your commitment to truly supporting grantees.

We really appreciate your commitment to supporting local organizations.

We think that it is wonderful that you engage community volunteers to review proposals and are honored to be considered.

We were thrilled to learn we could apply for a larger grant this round, and, as always, it was great to meet w/ the volunteer reviewers! They are fantastic, ask great questions, and share a lot of commitment to non-profit work.

It wasn't entirely clear to us if the larger grant size was separate from the consideration for a longer (10 year) grant. It would be helpful to have had a little more clarity on this process over the last few years. This has been a little hard to follow, and to communicate across our team internally. Thank you again.

Well, I have to say that I'm extremely impressed by the Cummings Foundation. There is a level of professionalism and thoroughness to the organization that is often lacking in other grant-awarding institutions. And as stated, the questions asked and information requested are themselves an excellent roadmap to applicants. They make it clear that those applying must meet high standards. And that is both necessary and laudable.

Would love to develop closer relations with Cummings beyond just funding.

Your application itself allows us to fairly represent our organization and programs in a concrete way. While our finance colleague is experienced in conveying budget information in whatever form is required, I thought that the explanatory video would be helpful to those nonprofits whose finance staff has less experience. Really, your requests for information are straightforward, clear and easy to understand.