

Nonprofit Development & Support (2026)

Special and Urgent Needs Guidelines

The Special and Urgent Needs (SUN) grant program helps Vermont nonprofits with unexpected expenses that impact their ability to meet their mission. A SUN grant can help an organization manage an unbudgeted, unforeseen, and time-sensitive emergency or take advantage of an unanticipated opportunity that will enhance its work. The full guidelines and evaluation criteria for the Special and Urgent Needs grant program are listed on our website. Please [click here](#) to review these details including additional project examples before submitting your application.

SUN funds proposals that will allow an organization to address these types of short-term needs:

- **Emergency repairs of building structures or mechanical systems (heating/cooling, water service, etc.) whose sudden and unexpected failure interferes with the provision of services.**
 - An example of a grant of this nature would be costs for a roof repair resulting from an extreme weather event.
- **Provision of services or acquisition of a resource that could not have been anticipated or budgeted, and without which the organization cannot meet their mission and serve their community.**
 - An example of this type of grant is training on post-traumatic stress disorder for school guidance counselors supporting children in towns severely impacted by disaster.
- **Replacement of essential equipment or technology whose sudden and unexpected failure interferes with the provision of services.**
 - An example would be a stove at a shelter that breaks just outside of the warranty period but well before the end of its expected life.
- **Programming that helps organizations support staff and/or volunteer mental health and wellbeing in times of extraordinary need. This may include, but is not limited to, a**

traumatic event or disruption within the organization, a period of high turnover, and/or unusual stress or demands on staff.

- Examples of activities for funding might include a staff outing or retreat, facilitated teambuilding or dialogue, grief counseling, or therapeutic yoga or art programming.
- **We will also consider an unexpected and timely opportunity that significantly enhances an organization's ability to meet its mission.**
 - For example, an unexpected opportunity to acquire a key resource at an excellent price.

We only fund projects that are unbudgeted, unforeseen, and time sensitive. We do not make grants for:

- deferred building maintenance, such as a roof that has been leaking for several months and/or years;
- deferred technology upgrades, like a computer or other piece of technology that is no longer working or failing to work but is well beyond its projected life span;
- construction project overruns, including surprise costs that are revealed during renovation or once projects are underway
- capital campaigns;
- religious purposes;
- individuals;
- debts;
- legal services;
- past due tax return and audit preparation

We also cannot consider applications for budget deficits or funding shortfalls; this grant round is designed to help nonprofits with unbudgeted and unexpected expenses, not to fill in for unmet revenue projections. We typically do not fund work that has already been completed.

The Special and Urgent Needs grant program prioritizes funding for organizations serving basic human needs within their communities (social services, food access, housing, and or health-related services). The program will prioritize applicants with operating budgets of \$500,000 or less.

Helpful Hints:

- Character limits include spaces.
- Be sure to save your work frequently by clicking the "Save" button at the bottom of the page as the system will log out after 90 minutes of inactivity.

- The size of text boxes can be adjusted by dragging on the lower right corner.
- Create a PDF version of your application via the "Application Packet" button at the top of the page. All content and attachments will be included.

All applications must be submitted electronically to the Vermont Community Foundation through the application form in the Online Grants Manager, which can be accessed at www.vermontcf.org/OGM. Applications will not be accepted by mail or email. If you have questions about the Online Grants Manager, please contact grants@vermontcf.org or 802-388-3355 opt. 6.

Applications are accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis.

Organizational Questions

What is your organization's annual operating budget?*

Character Limit: 20

Financial Statements - Current Fiscal Year*

Upload a copy of your organization's budget to actual, including both revenue and expenses, from its current fiscal year. Sample documents can be downloaded from the Community Foundation's website - visit our Online Grants Center FAQ for more details.

File Size Limit: 3 MB

What status best describes the applicant?*

Our grants must be paid to a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, place of worship/religious group, or town/municipal agency. If your organization or group does not fall into one of these categories, you will need to use a fiscal sponsor. If you have questions, please contact 802-388-3355 opt. 6. We are happy to talk through your options.

Choices

Municipal entity (i.e., town, public school, or other municipal department or agency)

Registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit

Place of worship or religious group

Other - Please provide details in your answer to the next question.

Use this space to provide additional information about the applicant's status. (If Applicable)

If you have a fiscal sponsor—or if you operate under the umbrella of a larger registered nonprofit—provide their name below.

Character Limit: 200

Fiscal Sponsor Agreement Form (If Applicable)

Download a blank Fiscal Sponsor Agreement Form ([click here to download the form](#)) and forward it to your fiscal sponsor to print, fill out, and sign. The form must be filled out completely and you must use the official VCF form. Please call 802-388-3355 opt. 6 if you have questions.

Upload the form here.

File Size Limit: 3 MB

Special and Urgent Needs Application Questions

The Special and Urgent Needs grant program prioritizes funding for organizations serving basic human needs within their communities (social services, food access, housing, and/or health related services). Does your organization support communities in this way?*

Choices

Yes

No

Describe the current emergency or opportunity.*

What is happening, how it happened, and what needs to be done to address the problem.

Character Limit: 2500

Timeline*

Please indicate when the emergency or opportunity came to your attention, what you've been doing since, and your timeline for completion of the work.

Character Limit: 2500

Why is this emergency need or opportunity unbudgeted, unforeseen, and time-sensitive?*

Please fully address each of these three points. Include the age of any failed equipment, and share information that will help us understand that this is not deferred maintenance, if applicable.

Character Limit: 2500

Project Budget*

Attach a copy of your itemized project budget showing both expenses and revenue, with a narrative description for each expense line included in the budget document. Sample documents can be downloaded from the Community Foundation's website - visit our [Online Grants Center FAQ](#) for more details.

File Size Limit: 3 MB