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About the John Rex Endowment

The John Rex Endowment supports an environment where children and families in greater Wake County live healthy lives. Guided by the belief that all children should reach their full potential, the John Rex Endowment works with the community to support the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of children.

The John Rex Endowment's work is guided by our five-year plan, Our Plan for Impact, 2013-2018. Our plan focuses on five goals that we believe are the most promising avenues through which we can make the greatest difference and bring about positive change for children, birth to age 18, in Wake County.

Deadlines and Dates

Organizations can apply for funding in either the Fall or the Winter Grant Award Cycle.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Fall Grant Award Cycle</th>
<th>Winter Grant Award Cycle</th>
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<tr>
<td>Letters of Intent Due</td>
<td>End of day on Jun. 14, 2016</td>
<td>End of day on Oct. 11, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invited Applications Due</td>
<td>End of day on Aug. 9, 2016</td>
<td>End of day on Dec. 13, 2016</td>
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<td>Award Status Notification</td>
<td>By end of Oct. 2016</td>
<td>By end of Feb. 2017</td>
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<td>Grant Start Dates</td>
<td>Jan. 1, 2017 or after</td>
<td>Apr. 1, 2017 or after</td>
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Questions

Contact Gladys Hairston (gladys@rexendowment.org or 919-838-1110 x6).
Nonprofit Capacity Building Overview

Our Nonprofit Capacity Building goal is to build the strength and sustainability of nonprofit organizations that support Wake County children in living healthy lives.

The John Rex Endowment’s announcement in 2009 that it would begin investing in nonprofit capacity building was met with enthusiastic response from area nonprofits. During that first grant cycle, 13 organizations received funding dedicated to building the strength and resilience of organizations serving Wake County children.

Grantee experiences and our learnings consistently reinforce the importance and value of assessing and improving nonprofit infrastructure. In essence, our nonprofit capacity building provides an opportunity for organizations to pause, learn, reflect, and take action in developing long-term and sustainable solutions to the challenges they face in addressing the needs of the county’s children.

For this Nonprofit Capacity Building request for proposals (RFP), the John Rex Endowment is interested in supporting organizations to engage in capacity building efforts that have a specific purpose or address a particular issue in one or more of six key organizational development areas.

Six Key Organizational Development Areas

1. Mission, Vision, and Strategy
   Strengthening the core planning of an organization in line with its overall purpose.
2. Governance and Leadership
   Strengthening organizational governance and fostering leadership.
3. Resource Development
   Ensuring financial sustainability.
4. Strategic Relationships
   Improving the organization’s relationship with external stakeholders.
5. Internal Operations and Management
   Contributing to a strong and sound core infrastructure.
6. Program Delivery and Impact
   Enhancing an organization’s overall program impact.

For additional information about our Nonprofit Capacity Building funding area, and details regarding the John Rex Endowment’s five-year plan, read “Our Plan for Impact, 2013-2018.”

“CAPACITY BUILDING is whatever is needed to bring a nonprofit to the next level of operational, programmatic, financial, or organizational maturity, so it may more effectively and efficiently advance its mission into the future. Capacity building is not a one-time effort to improve short-term effectiveness, but a continuous improvement strategy toward the creation of a sustainable and effective organization.”

National Council of Nonprofits
What We Will Fund

The John Rex Endowment is seeking capacity building grant proposals from organizations who have previously received or are currently receiving Nonprofit Capacity Building funding from the John Rex Endowment.

Proposed grants must:
1. Must be derived from priorities identified through the required John Rex Endowment organizational assessment and/or ongoing capacity building work.
2. Focus on one or more of the six key organizational development areas as listed on pg. 2.

If your organizational assessment was completed more than five years ago, you must undergo a renewal organizational assessment as part of your proposed capacity building request. This will provide you with the opportunity to reflect on what you’ve achieved since your prior assessment, how your priorities may have shifted over time, and what new capacity building needs are pressing issues for your organization. Contact Gladys Hairston (gladys@rexendowment.org or 919-838-1110 x6) for more info.

As part of our support for capacity building, the John Rex Endowment will pay for an annual membership in the NC Center for Nonprofits for the year in which the grant term begins. The membership fee should be included in the budget request. Grantees are responsible for all communication and coordination of membership with the NC Center for Nonprofits.

What We Won’t Fund

Capacity building grants will not be made for the following activities: general operating support; emergency repairs; debt liquidation; expenses associated with capital campaigns; or routine administrative costs. Projects requesting a consultant to perform routine staff functions will not receive funding. Requests for new or existing programs or services will not be considered.

Personnel expenses are allowable and in most cases necessary. However, we won’t fund a “position” (for example, a new development director or an accountant). Instead, personnel expenses must be explicitly linked to activities described in your proposed capacity building project.

Capital expenses are allowable for equipment purchases and installation (e.g., computers)—if necessary for the success of your capacity building work—but should not be included when calculating indirect expenses. Capital expense requests for construction, acquisition and/or renovation of facilities and other structures (e.g., new clinic) will not be considered.
Grant Term
Capacity building grants typically range from 12 to 18 months. However, there is no minimum or maximum grant term. Grant terms should be realistic and feasible according to the purpose and scope of the proposed project.

Grant Size
The John Rex Endowment expects to award up to $100,000 per grant award cycle for a total of $200,000 for this RFP. Funding requests for capacity building grants are limited to $35,000 ($40,250 including 15% indirect expenses). Similar to grant terms, requested budgets should be realistic and feasible according to the purpose and scope of the proposed capacity building project.

Who We Will Fund
For this RFP, the John Rex Endowment will only consider applications from organizations who previously received or are currently receiving Nonprofit Capacity Building support (either organizational assessment or capacity building grant funding) from the John Rex Endowment. In addition, all applicants must:

- Be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization designated as a public charity. Government agencies, academic institutions, and coalitions are not eligible to apply. Generally, supporting 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations are not eligible to apply. If you are a supporting organization, contact Gladys Hairston (919-838-1110 x6 or gladys@rexendowment.org) to determine your eligibility.
- Have 501(c)(3) status and have been in operation for at least three years.
- Have an operating budget of less than $10 million.
- Have a primary focus on, or play a significant role in, supporting vulnerable Wake County children birth to age 18 (i.e., children for whom there are disparities in health and well-being because of race/ethnicity, low-income status, disability, or other factors) in living healthy lives.
- Be a local organization serving Wake County or a regional organization serving Wake and one or more surrounding counties. Applications from statewide organizations will be considered if (1) they have a strong policy advocacy component that impacts the health and well-being of Wake County children, or (2) their programs and services address a need that is not met by a local or regional organization. Branches or affiliates of an organization operating nationally are generally not eligible to apply unless they are operating independently (i.e., own 501(c)(3), own Board of Directors, etc.). If you have questions about your eligibility, please contact Gladys Hairston (919-838-1110 x6 or gladys@rexendowment.org).

Working with Consultants
Consultants, if applicable, must be selected prior to application. An outside consultant is not required for capacity building grants. Your use of an outside consultant depends on the nature of your capacity building work; whether or not staff have required expertise and time available for the work; and what, if any, benefit a neutral outside perspective can contribute to the effort.

Please note that the John Rex Endowment does not endorse or recommend any particular consultants or consultant firms. Should you need assistance in identifying a consultant to work with your organization, we have a directory of consultants in the area. In addition, we have created a guide that details our perspective on working with consultants as well as resources that can assist organizations in managing the process of engaging and working with consultants. Click here to access our "Working with Consultants" guide.
In addition, we expect these criteria for consultants that are providing expertise in nonprofit capacity building through John Rex Endowment funding:

- Complies with State of NC regulations and licensure requirements as applicable (e.g., fundraising counsel or professional solicitor licensing).
- A minimum of three years nonprofit experience (as staff, board, volunteer, or consultant).
- A minimum of two years recent experience in a nonprofit consulting role.
- Demonstrated skill in relevant area(s) of practice.
- Demonstrated effectiveness in working in a consulting role with nonprofit clients.

Resources

In addition to our consultant directory and guide for working with consultants, the John Rex Endowment has other resources, like our “10 Tips for Successful Nonprofit Capacity Building Projects,” in the Nonprofit Capacity Building & Coalition Effectiveness Learnings section of our website.

How to Apply

To respond to this funding opportunity, you must Apply Online. If you are not already registered in our online system, we highly recommend that you complete the registration process early and familiarize yourself with the new system. The John Rex Endowment provides guidelines and tips for using our online grant management system on our website.

Letters of Intent (LOIs), the first stage of the online application process, must be completed and submitted via the deadlines specified on pg.1 of this RFP. If a LOI or application is not received according to the deadlines specified, it will not be reviewed until the next grant award cycle. For example, a LOI submitted one day late, will not be reviewed until the next grant award cycle.

LOIs are reviewed by John Rex Endowment staff. An applicant will either be invited to submit a full application or their LOI will be denied. Applicants are typically notified of the review decision within 7 business days of the LOI deadline specified above.

If invited to submit a full application:
- Applications must be completed by the deadlines specified on pg. 1 of this RFP.
- The John Rex Endowment’s Health Improvement Committee reviews submitted applications. Applicants will be notified of the status of their application following the committee’s review in September 2016 for the Fall Grant Award Cycle and in January 2017 for the Winter Grant Award Cycle.

The committee presents applications recommended for funding to the John Rex Endowment Board of Directors for award consideration. Applicants will be notified of status following the board meeting in October 2016 for the Fall Grant Award Cycle and in February 2017 for the Winter Grant Award Cycle.
Preparing a Successful Grant Proposal

We often receive phone calls from organizations asking this question: "Is the John Rex Endowment likely to fund this XYZ idea?" In most cases, as long as the caller has read the RFP and the idea is in the "ballpark," this is a question we can't and won't answer after a phone conversation. Below, we've outlined the basic requirements as well as our tips for preparing a successful grant proposal.

Before You Get Started

- Are you eligible to apply (see "Who We Will Fund" on pg. 4)?
- Have you read this RFP from start to finish?
- If you have a general question about applying for a grant, have you accessed the John Rex Endowment’s Commonly Asked Questions on our website?
- If you didn't find your answer in our Commonly Asked Questions or you need clarification on something specific to this RFP, have you contacted Gladys Hairston (gladys@rexendowment.org, or 919-838-1110 x6) who is ready to provide assistance?

An underlying philosophy that informs our consideration of applications is that nonprofit capacity building work is not easy work: there are no magical solutions and the level of benefit to organizations directly correlates to the level of time and effort invested by organizations. We expect that grantees approach this work with the understanding that, even with the use of a consultant, staff and board members should be adequately prepared for their role and responsibilities to ensure the work has value.

LOI stands for Letter to Impress

The LOI is the first form you will complete in our online grant management system after you choose the grant opportunity you are responding to. Think of the LOI as a preliminary application and your one chance to excite us with your idea for how you can strengthen your organization. And, though the LOI may be shorter than a full application, don't underestimate the time you will need to prepare a quality LOI. We allow more than a month for applicants to submit the LOI for this reason.

Here are the key things to note when writing a letter to impress:

- You are eligible to apply.
- Your proposed project idea is clear and to the point; and you’ve convinced us the project is needed – with supporting details from your organizational assessment and/or ongoing capacity building efforts.
- You’ve made a compelling argument that now is the right time and that your organization understands what it will take to be successful in your capacity building endeavor/s.
- You are able to demonstrate strong and measurable impact, either directly or indirectly, on vulnerable Wake County children.
- The level of your impact on vulnerable Wake County children via your organization’s work is meaningful in terms of number of children impacted; your ability to demonstrate how these children are vulnerable; and the proportion of your work overall that is focused on Wake County children.
You impressed John Rex Endowment staff and have been invited to submit a full application. Congratulations! However, you still have work to do to be successful in receiving a grant award. The application is your avenue to describe what you want to achieve through the grant project and the means by which you will do so. If you received feedback from John Rex Endowment staff based on your LOI, it is also an opportunity for you to address any questions that were raised about your project idea. Here are the guidelines for an awesome application:

- You’ve met all of the requirements outlined in this RFP, and you’ve submitted a complete application with all requested information.
- You’ve provided a solid and compelling case for the need for the project by providing specific and relevant information. In addition, you have reflected on both internal and external—economic, political, social, etc.—changes and their potential impact on the organization and the capacity building process.
- You’ve provided evidence of an approach that is based on established best practices in organizational development work and is most likely to lead to your desired outcomes for the organization.
- Your ability to carry out your proposed project as described (project activities, person/s responsible, timeline, proposed budget, consultant/s, etc.) appears to be both feasible and suitable for your capacity building project goals.
- You’ve clearly articulated why you are motivated to engage in this capacity building work, why the timing is right, and how you are ready and open to change, even if the change is difficult.

Expectations of Grantees

Those organizations new to working with the John Rex Endowment must meet with the John Rex Endowment at the beginning of the grant term. Other meetings may be initiated by the grantee, or required by the John Rex Endowment. All grantees must submit interim and/or final progress and financial reports to the John Rex Endowment.

Sources Cited