



Nonprofit Capacity Building Request for Proposals

IN THIS RFP, YOU WILL FIND:

Deadlines and Dates	2
Q & A	2
Grant Descriptions	2
Eligibility Criteria	5
Working with Consultants	5
Resources	6
How to Apply	7
Preparing a Successful Grant Proposal	7
Expectations of Grantees	9
Sources Cited	9

Overview

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.

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

Highlights of Nonprofit Capacity Building grants:

- 2-year grants
- Priority to organizations working in Wake County and serving vulnerable children (see definition on pg. 8)
- Priority to organizations with a strong focus on children’s healthy weight; childhood injury prevention; and/or children’s mental health, social and emotional well-being
- Includes: Organizational Assessment and/or Capacity Building
- Up to \$60,000 or \$80,000 per grant, depending on grant type
- Required participation in peer learning cohort

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 Nonprofits¹

Deadlines and Dates

The John Rex Endowment will only accept applications during our Fall Grant Award Cycle.

Fall Grant Award Cycle	
Letters of Intent Due	End of day* on Jun. 12, 2018
Full Applications Invited	Week of Jun. 18, 2018
Invited Applications Due	End of day* on Aug. 14, 2018
Preliminary Review Status Notification	By end of Sept. 2018
Award Status Notification	By end of Oct. 2018
Grant Start Dates	Jan. 1, 2019

**End of day denotes 11:59PM ET*

Q&A

If you have a general question about applying for a grant, first refer to John Rex Endowment's [Commonly Asked Questions](#) on our website. John Rex Endowment staff are also available to answer questions via email or phone. **Contact Gladys Hairston (gladys@rexendowment.org or 919-838-1110 x6).**

Grant Descriptions

John Rex Endowment's Nonprofit Capacity Building funding 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 nonprofits organizations desiring to engage in capacity building focused on key organizational development areas (see top of next page).

Organizations apply for funding in one of two available grant options:

- An **Organizational Assessment/Capacity Building grant** supports 1) an assessment of the six organizational development areas, and 2) capacity building work to address the organizational assessment's prioritized recommendations.
- A **Capacity Building grant** supports capacity building work that addresses a particular issue in one or more of the six key organizational development areas, as identified in a previously completed organizational assessment and/or through ongoing capacity building efforts.

In your letter of intent, you will describe any previous capacity building work as well as designate your desired grant option. The information you provide will help us confirm which grant type you are eligible to be invited for at the application stage.

Six Key Organizational Development Areas²



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.

Organizational Assessment/Capacity Building grant

Effective capacity building begins with a comprehensive organizational assessment – a process of determining an organization's current strengths and challenges in order to identify priority capacity building needs and recommended steps for improvement. Following the completion of the organizational assessment, grantees submit a proposed action plan for moving forward with capacity building efforts. If your organization has completed a recent organizational assessment, you should apply for the second grant option, a Capacity Building grant, as long as your assessment meets the requirements described here.

Organizational Assessment requirements:

1. Must be conducted by an outside professional consultant who is skilled and experienced in implementing an effective organizational assessment process. (See "Working with Consultants" section on pg. 5).
2. Must meaningfully involve board leadership as well as staff in the organizational assessment process.
3. Must assess each of the six key organizational development areas to identify strengths and challenges/areas for improvement.
4. Must include a review of organizational documents (legal documents, financial statements, and other important management documents) in addition to gathering key stakeholder input.

Organizational Assessment final deliverable:

It is expected that the consultant will produce a written document (confidential to the organization and not shared with the John Rex Endowment) that describes the process completed and recommends areas for improvement and defined focus for the Capacity Building phase:

- ⇒ Shorter-term and/or no or lower-cost improvements and activities—These include one-time activities that have a self-contained purpose or preparation or planning activities that must be done to prepare for more complex capacity building work.
- ⇒ Longer-term and/or higher-cost improvements and activities—These include capacity building activities that are complex in nature and will require a significant investment of time and/or financial resources to undertake.
- ⇒ All recommendations, within each of these sets, should be organized by priority and level of impact.

In our experience, the organizational assessment takes about six months (see Grant Term on pg. 4 for more information). The grantee will use their organizational assessment report to develop its proposed action plan for identified capacity building needs.

Capacity Building grant

As mentioned above, applicants may select the Capacity Building grant option if you have already completed a recent organizational assessment that meets the organizational assessment requirements on the previous page. Typically, an assessment is considered recent within the past five years; however, organizations whose assessments were done three or more years prior but didn't follow through on any identified priorities should consider applying for an Organizational Assessment/Capacity Building grant. A Capacity Building grant solely focuses on capacity building activities over the full two-year period. The priorities identified during a previously completed organizational assessment or from prior capacity building work determine the work to be undertaken during the Capacity Building grant.

Capacity Building requirements:

1. Must be derived from priorities identified through a completed organizational assessment and/or ongoing capacity building work.
2. Must focus on one or more of the six key organizational development areas listed at the top of pg. 3.

Grant Term

Nonprofit Capacity Building grants cover 24 months, beginning January 1, 2019, and ending December 31, 2020.

Organizations applying for an Organizational Assessment/Capacity Building grant will determine how much time within this two-year time frame to allocate to the organizational assessment, with the remainder of the time set aside for addressing identified capacity building priorities. Typically, we've found that organizations require on average six months to complete an organizational assessment. That said, we understand that your proposed organizational assessment process will shape how much time is needed to carry out this phase well.

Grant Size

Funding requests for an Organizational Assessment/Capacity Building grant are limited to a maximum of \$60,000.

Requests for a Capacity Building grant are limited to a maximum of \$80,000.

As part of our support for capacity building and as part of your overall funding request, applicants can opt for an annual membership in the NC Center for Nonprofits for both years of the grant. If you'd like the John Rex Endowment to cover the costs of this option, your membership fee should be included within each year's budget request.

Eligibility Criteria

To apply for either Nonprofit Capacity Building grant option, organizations must meet the eligibility criteria delineated below. For additional information regarding how we assess these criteria during the review process, see “Preparing a Successful Grant Proposal” beginning on pg. 7.

The John Rex Endowment will only consider applications from organizations that:

- Are 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 been in operation for at least three years.
- Have an operating budget of less than \$10 million. Organizations with an operating budget of less than \$5 million will receive priority consideration.
- Are a local organization serving Wake County **OR** you are a regional or statewide organization serving Wake as well as other NC counties and (1) you have a strong policy advocacy component that impacts the health and well-being of Wake County children, or (2) your programs and services address a need that is not met by a local 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).*
- Have a primary emphasis on, or play a significant role in, supporting vulnerable Wake County children birth to age 18 in living healthy lives. Organizations must have an explicit focus on **children’s health and well-being**.

The John Rex Endowment takes a whole-child approach to defining CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING recognizing that health is more than being disease-free: being healthy requires children be well, feel well, and do well physically, mentally, and socially.^{3,4} Child Trends identifies five domains of child well-being: physical health and safety; social-emotional and psychological development; social behaviors; relationships; and cognitive development.⁵

Working with Consultants

An outside consultant is required for the organizational assessment and must be identified when submitting a full application (see “How to Apply” on pg. 7). For capacity building activities, depending on identified priorities, the grantee may continue with the same consultant used for the organizational assessment (if applicable), may engage another consultant/s, or may determine that a consultant is not necessary.

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 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.

We expect a consultant that is providing expertise in nonprofit capacity building through John Rex Endowment funding to meet these criteria:

- 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 director, 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.

Organizational Assessment Consultant Guidelines: As noted above, an outside consultant is required for carrying out the organizational assessment. The consultant must be identified, if invited to submit a full application, when the application is submitted (see "How to Apply" on pg. 7). If invited to submit a full grant application, you will be required to submit a description of your proposed organizational assessment process. This description should be completed by you in partnership with the consultant you have selected. Some consultants may have a standard description of the organizational assessment process they typically conduct. However, working through a set of guided questions together gives your consultant and you an opportunity to tailor the organizational assessment process to best fit your organization.

Capacity Building Consultant Guidelines: An outside consultant is not required for carrying out capacity building activities. Each organization's decision on engaging a consultant depends on the grantee's assessment of:

- the nature of the 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 might provide.

If consultant support is desired, the grantee may continue working with the organizational assessment consultant or may engage another consultant/s. Any new consultants selected must be approved by the John Rex Endowment.

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

The John Rex Endowment will only accept applications for Nonprofit Capacity Building funding in our Fall Grant Award Cycle. 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. 2 of this RFP.

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. 2 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 2018.
- 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 2018.

Preparing a Successful Letter of Intent

We often receive phone calls from organizations asking this question: "Is the John Rex Endowment likely to fund our organization?" This is a question we can't and won't answer after a phone conversation unless your organization clearly doesn't fit our eligibility criteria. Starting on the following page, 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 "Eligibility Criteria" on pg. 5)?
- 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 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. The John Rex Endowment knows that there are no magical solutions and that 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 support of a consultant – staff and board members need to be deeply engaged to ensure the work has value.

LOI stands for Letter to *Introduce*

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 making your case about what you hope to gain from this grant opportunity. And, though the LOI may be shorter than a full application, don't underestimate the time you will need to prepare a quality LOI.



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

- You are eligible to apply. (see "Eligibility Criteria" on pg. 5).
- *If you're applying for an Organizational Assessment/Capacity Building grant*, you've clearly stated how your organizational assessment process will serve as a springboard to capacity building work while maintaining an open mind as to what capacity building needs will be identified through the organizational assessment process.
- *If you're applying for a Capacity Building grant*, your proposed project idea is clear and to the point; and you've made a compelling case that the project is needed – with supporting details from your organizational assessment and/or ongoing capacity building efforts.
- You have a mission, as well as programs and services, aligned with the John Rex Endowment's funding areas: Healthy Weight; Injury Prevention; or Mental Health, Social and Emotional Well-being. Organizations with greater levels of alignment with one or more of our funding areas will receive priority consideration.
- You've illustrated that your organization significantly impacts a meaningful number of Wake County children given your organization's geographic scope and programming. This includes highlighting that a significant proportion of the organization's overall work is focused on Wake County children.
- You've demonstrated that you have a primary emphasis on, or play a significant role in, supporting vulnerable Wake County children birth to age 18 in living healthy lives and that you have an explicit focus on children's health and well-being, as defined on pg. 5. This focus often will be articulated or directly stated in an organization's vision, mission, goals or in specific program/service descriptions.

The John Rex Endowment defines **VULNERABLE** children as children for whom there are disparities in health and well-being because of race/ethnicity, low-income status, disability, or other factors.

In highlighting your organization's efforts to specifically benefit vulnerable Wake County children:

For those applicant organizations that do not solely focus on vulnerable children, you must be able to articulate how the work of your organization benefits vulnerable children. For example, organizations might describe the number of vulnerable children impacted; the proportion of the organization's work overall that is focused on vulnerable Wake County children; how services are developed strategically to meet the needs of vulnerable children/families; where programs/services are geographically located; or how the organization intentionally assures the accessibility of their programs/services to vulnerable children/families.

John Rex Endowment will invite full applications based on these criteria and our intention to award no more than four grants. If invited, the John Rex Endowment staff will share feedback and detailed tips to help guide you in your application submission.

Expectations of Grantees

Peer Learning Cohort

Within the two-year grant term, all selected Nonprofit Capacity Building grantees will participate in a Peer Learning Cohort that will meet once per quarter – roughly for a half-day – to share experiences, learnings, challenges and resources. Modest between-session “homework” assignments will also be completed. Working with a team of two facilitators, as well as four grantee organizations from last year’s Nonprofit Capacity Building cycle, the grantees will actively shape the focus of each session as well as help determine the best timing/duration for each quarterly session. Our expectation is that the grantees will build enduring peer relationships with their fellow grantees that can provide continuing support for organizational development.

The first session of the Peer Learning Cohort will meet in January 2019. During that session, the schedule will be coordinated for the remaining sessions.

Grantee Requirements

- Attend quarterly sessions of the Peer Learning Cohort, as described above.
- For Organizational Assessment/Capacity Building grantees: Submit an interim report and proposed action plan at the completion of the Organizational Assessment phase and a report at the end of the grant term.
- For Capacity Building grantees: Submit an interim report near the end of the first year and a report at the end of the grant term.
- Participate in an interim meeting with John Rex Endowment program staff at the completion of the organizational assessment or near the end of the first year (for Capacity Building grant recipients), and a final meeting at the end of the grant. As needed, other meetings may be initiated by grantees or required by the John Rex Endowment.
- Be available for post-grant updates to help the John Rex Endowment evaluate this work.

Sources Cited

1. National Council of Nonprofits (2016). *What is Capacity Building?*. Retrieved from: <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/what-capacity-building>
2. Key areas are those recommended in: Connolly, P. and Lukas, C. (2002). *Strengthening Nonprofit Performance: A Funder’s Guide to Capacity Building*. Amherst H. Wilder Foundation in collaboration with Grantmakers for Effective Organizations.
3. World Health Organization (n.d.). *Constitution of the World Health Organization: Principles*. Retrieved from: <http://www.who.int/about/mission/en/>
4. Centers for Disease Control (May 31, 2016). *Health-Related Quality of Life: Well-Being Concepts*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/hrqol/wellbeing.htm>
5. Child Trends (2016). *Child Well-Being: Constructs to Measure Child Well-Being and Risk and Protective Factors that Affect the Development of Young Children*. Retrieved from: <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/child-well-constructs-measure-child-well-risk-protective-factors-affect-development-young-children>