



JustFilms Grant Application Guide

1. To begin the grant application process, thoroughly review our JustFilms initiative. Please also familiarize yourself with the foundation's other initiatives. In addition to providing an overview of our grant-making priorities, each initiative, as well as each region, includes detailed "For Grant Seekers" information; this is the most current guide to the type of work we fund and provides a barometer for the kinds of issues we are likely to support through JustFilms.
2. We also urge you to read this entire document. Our grant-review process is thorough and comprehensive, and the information below will help you better understand our approach to grant making.
3. Once you have completed both of these steps, you are ready to submit an online grant inquiry.

How We Make Grants

The Ford Foundation is committed to achieving lasting change that transforms people's lives. Through our grant making, we support innovative thinkers, leaders and organizations that are working to reduce poverty and injustice and to promote democratic values, free expression and human achievement. When making grants, we think about long-term strategies, knowing that lasting social change requires decades of effort. And because our mission is broad and our resources are limited, we carefully target our support so it can be used most effectively and leverage the greatest amount of impact.

To that end, program teams working on each of our initiatives consult with practitioners, researchers, policy makers, current and potential grantees, and others to identify areas where the foundation's resources are needed most. The teams then pinpoint specific approaches grantees might undertake—program exploration, advocacy, litigation or capacity building, to name just a few—to help achieve the social change we have identified. (See our grant-making approaches for a full list.) The teams also determine key benchmarks for progress and the amount of funding to be dedicated to each approach.

After the approaches, benchmarks and budget are set, the team begins to make grants within the agreed-upon parameters. When making grants, the team looks for new ideas and effective organizations that can help advance the work of a particular initiative, as well as for evidence that the people and organizations are likely to succeed in their project. Program teams regularly provide reports to the foundation's board of trustees about progress made on each initiative.

What We Don't Fund

JustFilms only makes grants for projects that align with our [mission](#) and focus on social justice issues. There are a number of areas that we do not support. We do not provide funds for projects related to health, sports, or early childhood; we do not fund educational, industrial, scientific or student projects; and we do not fund projects that are solely intended to be used for the purposes of advocacy, or that would be considered advocacy, educational, scientific, industrial, or student films, feature films or fictional television show.

The foundation has 10 regional offices in Asia, Africa and Latin America. When considering projects with an international focus, we require that the project focus on a region where the foundation works. In other words, if we do not have an office in the region where your film or media project takes place, it is not eligible for funding.

Finally, we do not support projects in pre-production. To apply for a grant, we require that you provide a trailer, selects or a rough cut for review. If you are not in a position to provide such materials, we recommend you apply when your project is more evolved.

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Applying for a Grant

You may apply for a grant by visiting the Grants section of our Web site and submitting an online grant inquiry.

You will be asked to indicate the region where your work will be pursued. If your work benefits more than one geographic area outside of the United States, you should apply for a global grant, which covers multiple regions. You will also be asked to provide basic information:

- Contact information for yourself and your organization
- Brief description of your organization
- List of those who would carry out the project
- Estimated project budget and time frame

In addition, we ask that you attach a letter about your documentary film or media project that includes the following:

- Brief description of your project and creative approach
- Primary purpose of the project
- Current stage of the project and whether any other funds have been raised for the film

The foundation supports equal opportunity in its grant making and in its internal policies. When evaluating grant proposals, we consider the opportunities that prospective grantee organizations provide for women and other disadvantaged groups.

We do not have submission deadlines. Applications are considered throughout the year.

What Happens Next

Every inquiry receives an automatic acknowledgment reply. If your submission falls within our general issue areas, your inquiry will be numbered and a confirmation letter will be e-mailed to you. Each numbered inquiry is reviewed by the relevant program team. If your proposed work aligns with the foundation's priorities and budget limitations, a program officer will contact you to begin the process of developing a formal proposal.

As you develop a formal proposal, you will meet several times with the program officer to discuss the scope and budget of your proposed project. Then you will submit your formal proposal, and the foundation will do an administrative and legal review; it takes about three months from the time a formal proposal is submitted for a potential grant to be fully reviewed.

Please bear in mind that our funds are limited in relation to the large number of worthwhile inquiries we receive. In a typical year, less than 1 percent of inquiries made to the Ford Foundation result in a grant.

Grant Funds Must Be Used Solely for Charitable Purposes

The activities we support through grants and program-related investments must be charitable, educational or scientific as defined under the appropriate provisions of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code and Treasury Regulations.

As we pursue the foundation's goals, we take all reasonable measures to fulfill our responsibilities as a tax-exempt charitable organization. We want to make sure that our funds are used for their intended charitable purposes and do not support any activities that violate the U.S. tax code or anti-terrorism laws. Because we appreciate the important work that our grantees do around the world, some in extremely difficult environments, we strive to fulfill our oversight responsibilities without creating undue burdens for them or being overly intrusive.

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How We Monitor Grants

To ensure the appropriate use of our grant funds and compliance with the U.S. tax code and U.S. anti-terrorism laws, the foundation has extensive procedures for making and monitoring all grants. These include the following:

1. **A Pre-Grant Review.** All potential grantee organizations and their programs are assessed by a program officer who discusses the proposed work with the prospective grantee and determines the organization's capacity to undertake it.
2. **A Legal Review.** All proposed grants and written submissions by the prospective grantee undergo a legal review.
3. **Compliance with U.S. Anti-Terrorism Financing Rules.** Under applicable law, the foundation checks all prospective grantees against available lists of terrorist groups. These checks also take place throughout the life of all grants.
4. **A Countersigned Grantee Letter.** This letter establishes a range of grant conditions. Every grantee is required to sign it.
5. **One or More Site Visits.** A program officer will visit the grantee during the term of the grant.
6. **Financial and Narrative Reports.** During the grant term, grantees are required to submit reports that are reviewed by a program officer and a grants administrator for compliance with the term of the grant.

If you believe that your organization is a good match with one of our funding priorities, and can meet all our requirements, please proceed to the grant inquiry form.