

Event Guidelines 2025-2026

The Ford Foundation is a leader in convening a wide variety of gatherings and activities related to social justice. Strategic, well-crafted events are a powerful means of advancing our mission and building momentum for change. We are pleased to have the opportunity to host and support many of them at the Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice, in accordance with the following guidelines.

If you have any questions, please reach out to the Center's event venue operations team at thecenter@fordfoundation.org.

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Eligibility and Restrictions

Eligibility

Ford Foundation staff, grantees, and nonprofit partner organizations are welcome to host events at the Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice. All events must advance the Center's charitable purposes, align with the foundation's mission and program strategies, and serve the social justice and nonprofit sectors. Events must be educational in nature or otherwise provide a public benefit.

To be eligible, an event must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Support the work and mission of Ford Foundation grantees
- Advance the Foundation's program strategies
- Serve the needs of social justice organizations aligned with the Foundation's mission

Restrictions

The following types of events are not permitted at the Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice:

- Events that do not directly relate to the Foundation's mission or program strategies
- Events involving 501(c)(4) activities, direct or grassroots lobbying, political campaigns, or partisan electoral activities
- Commercial or profit-making events
- Fundraising activities
- Private or non-charitable events such as weddings, birthday parties, or fashion shows
- Monetary transactions of any kind, including the collection of event fees or the sale of products or services

Monetary transactions

No monetary transactions, collection of event fees, or sale of products or services are permitted on site.

Event booking and approval

To be considered for eligibility, organizations must complete and submit an event application on the Center's website, fordfoundation.org.

Eligibility

We will consider event requests that come in within the following windows:

- Grantee events: Up to 8 months ahead of the requested event date
- Nonprofit and social justice-related events: Up to 6 months ahead of the requested event date

Because event spaces fill up quickly, organizations are strongly encouraged to apply at least three months in advance of the event. The Center cannot accept applications submitted outside the stated booking windows.

The Center will review submitted event application forms and inform the organization of eligibility within 15 business days.

Approved events

The Center will review submitted applications and notify organizations of eligibility within fifteen business days. Once approved, event organizers will receive written confirmation of the assigned room(s), date, and time. Requests to change an approved room, date, or time are subject to availability and cannot be guaranteed.

Venue agreement and confirmation

To confirm a reservation, organizers must sign a venue agreement. For events with anticipated service fees, special requirements, or more than twenty attendees, a certificate of insurance is also required at least two weeks prior to the event. Failure to submit the signed agreement or required insurance may result in the cancellation of the event.

Event fees, insurance, and cancellation

Fees

The Center does not charge rental fees for event spaces. However, fees apply for catering, dedicated audiovisual support, equipment rentals, additional security, and other special services.

Events scheduled outside of regular building hours (Monday through Thursday, 9:00 am to 6:00 pm) will also incur overtime staffing and building services charges. All fees are collected by Bon Appétit by credit card, check, or wire transfer.

Final payment

The final payment for all event-related fees is due within three (3) business days of receiving the final invoice from Bon Appétit.

Certificate of insurance

For events with associated fees, special requirements, or more than twenty (20) attendees, organizers must provide a certificate of insurance at least two weeks prior to the event date. Failure to provide the required documentation may result in the cancellation of the event.

Cancellation

Event organizers are asked to alert the Center of cancellation at least two weeks prior to the event date. Repeated cancellations may result in loss of future access to the venue and its services. If an event is cancelled by the host, they will be responsible for covering fees based on the cancellation fee matrix outlined in the catering agreement. If an event is cancelled due to force majeure, the Center will make every effort to cancel other services ordered for the event, without penalty. In the case that services cannot be cancelled, the event host will be responsible for covering all service fees.

Inclement weather policy

If the Ford Foundation offices close due to inclement weather, all events taking place in the building will be cancelled. The Center will make every effort to reschedule these events for a later date. If the event cannot be rescheduled, the Center will make every effort to cancel other services ordered for the event, without penalty. In the case that services cannot be cancelled, the event host will be responsible for covering all service fees.

Event & building information

Event hours

Regular event hours are Monday through Thursday from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm. In special cases, events are permitted outside of these hours, but will incur extra fees for staffing and building services. Events in the garden must start after 6:00 pm.

Events are not permitted on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays.

Event spaces

Event spaces vary in size and configuration. The Center houses:

- 1 Auditorium, seating 170 guests
- 3 Event Production Spaces, accommodating between 45 and 100 guests*
- 3 Multipurpose Rooms, accommodating between 10 and 55 guests*
- 2 Boardrooms, accommodating between 25 and 35 guests^
- 2 Reception Spaces, accommodating between 100 and 175 guests*

* Guest counts vary based on room setup and production needs. Possible setups include theater-style seating, hollow square or U-shape, and rounds or pods.

^ Guest counts vary based on the number of guests seated at the table with additional perimeter seating.

Room requests and assignments

The Center does not accept specific room requests and reserves the right to assign and/or move events to rooms that best align with venue operations.

Requests for breakout spaces cannot be accommodated.

Accessibility

The Center has taken steps to ensure that our building exceeds accessibility standards. The building is wheelchair-accessible, as are all event spaces. If you have an accommodation or service question or request, please discuss accommodation options with your Ford Foundation venue operations contact.

All-gender restrooms

Visitors are guaranteed safe access to restrooms, regardless of their gender identity and/or expression. Event attendees are welcome to use the single-occupancy, all-gender restrooms located on the eleventh floor and Level B.

Animal access

Guide dogs and service animals are permitted at the Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice. Other animals are not permitted.

Parents' room

A room is available for nursing parents hosting or attending an event. Reservations for the space can be arranged through your Ford Foundation venue operations contact.

Smoking

The Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice is a non-smoking facility. Smoking is not permitted inside the building or within 10 feet of any building entrance.

Event services and policies

Event staff

Upon confirming an event, a Ford Foundation team member will be assigned as your main point of contact throughout the planning process. The Center also secures facilities, audiovisual, catering, security, and janitorial staff for your event. Any additional event staffing, including registration staff, must be provided by the host organization.

Audiovisual

Wi-Fi is available throughout the building. The building is fully equipped to handle most event production needs and AV requirements for meetings and events. Ford Foundation AV staff is available for set-up and on-call support during regular event hours. A minimal cost applies for these services outside of regular event hours.

If dedicated tech support or additional equipment is requested or deemed necessary by the Center, additional fees will apply.

Catering

Bon Appétit is the Center's exclusive food and beverage caterer for all meetings and events taking place in the building. Outside food and beverages are not permitted. Florals, linens, and specialty furniture rentals can be discussed with your assigned venue operations contact and ordered through Bon Appétit.

Alcohol service

Alcohol service is generally available after 6:00 pm through Bon Appétit.

Security

The Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice has an in-house security team available for your event. If additional security guards or equipment are requested by the event host or deemed necessary by the Center, fees will apply.

Coat rooms

Coat rooms are available in the building. Arrangements for a staffed coat check can be made with your foundation venue operations contact for an additional fee, and rented through Bon Appétit.

Luggage and oversized bags are not permitted.

Lost and found

All items found after an event will be kept for up to two weeks. The Center is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged items during an event.

Furniture set up

Furniture (including tables, chairs, flipcharts, and stages) is included in your event reservation and will be set in the event spaces by the Ford Foundation facilities team. Event organizers can discuss preferred arrangements with their assigned Ford Foundation venue operations contact. Once the furniture has been set, only a member of the facilities team may move and/or arrange the furniture.

Rental of any furniture not provided by the Center can be discussed with your Ford Foundation venue operations contact, and requested through Bon Appétit.

Event materials and decor

All proposed decor must be approved by your Ford Foundation venue operations contact. The following items are not permitted: permanent markers, tape, push-pins, helium balloons, fog, dry ice, bubble machines, or any item which may float; the tossing of petals, glitter, or confetti. Also prohibited: unprotected candles, open flames, and live flames. The use of votives and/or enclosed candles is permitted, provided they are LED only.

Any arts and crafts activities that may involve items such as glue, paint, or glitter must be approved by your assigned Ford Foundation venue operations contact.

Your assigned Ford Foundation venue operations contact must approve of any materials hung on the wall prior to the event. Items may only be attached to the walls using painters' tape (which can be provided by the Center). Items may not be attached to any screens, exterior-facing windows, muraled walls, or artwork.

No signage, decorations, frames, or other materials may penetrate or be attached by fasteners of any kind to the walls, ceiling, floors, planters, or any other permanent fixtures. Materials that are hanging cannot be written on.

No items may be hung from the ceiling.

Event deliveries

The Center will accept event-related packages no more than two business days prior to an event date. The packages must be clearly labeled with the name of the event, the event number, the event date, and the name of the Center's venue operations contact.

Arrangements to have packages picked up from the Center after an event can be made with the venue operations team. The event organizer will be responsible for packaging and all delivery fees. The Center is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged items.

Loading dock and freight elevator

Use of the Center's loading dock and freight elevator for event-related deliveries must be scheduled through the Center's venue operations team. A certificate of insurance is required and must be submitted at least two weeks prior to use.

Sustainability

The Center is committed to reducing waste through recycling and minimizing the use of single-use or disposable items. Event hosts and attendees are asked to comply with recycling signage and remove any unused materials brought into the building.

Printing

Print services are unavailable on site. Event organizers are asked to handle printing of all event materials prior to their event day, and are encouraged to limit the distribution of single-use handouts.

Parking

On-site parking is not available.

Additional vendors

If you require additional services for your event, the Center is happy to provide a list of recommended vendors. All outside vendors must be approved by the Center and may be required to provide a certificate of insurance.

Event requirements

Event marketing materials

All promotional materials for the event—including invitations, advertisements (including social media), press releases, and literature—must have the Center’s explicit written approval prior to distribution. The Center may not be identified as a sponsor of any non-Ford Foundation-hosted events. The Center for Ford Foundation logo cannot be used on any non-Ford Foundation events.

Attendee lists

Event lists must be submitted to your foundation venue operations contact at least one business day prior to the event. The Center reserves the right to limit the number of guests for safety and security reasons. Walk-ins or unregistered guests are not permitted.

Registration

A dedicated registration area will be set up for events with 25 or more attendees. The event organizer is responsible for securing their own registration staff.

For events with 24 or fewer attendees, registration can take place with the Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice security team.

All attendees will be required to present a physical photo ID and are subject to bag screening.

Attendee security badges

The Center will provide printed security badges to all registered event attendees. Attendees must wear security badges at all times to ensure access to the designated event spaces.

Press

The Center must be made aware of any press presence in the building. Event organizers must also obtain the Center’s explicit prior written approval for any media coverage.

Recording and photography

Video recording, audio recording, and photography within your reserved event space are permitted, provided written approval is obtained from your Ford Foundation venue operations contact. Vendors may be required to provide a certificate of insurance. Recording and photographing outside of your dedicated event space is not permitted.

Intellectual property

Event hosts are responsible for ensuring that they have the necessary rights to use all content, multimedia, and other intellectual property for the event.

Event sponsors

Sponsors of an event may be recognized in the program or otherwise, but advertisements promoting products or services, as well as the distribution of sponsored food or beverages, are prohibited.

Participation by government officials or political candidates

The Center is prohibited from making certain kinds of payments to, or conferring certain benefits on, US government officials or political candidates. Attendance by government officials or candidates may also raise questions about electioneering or lobbying. Please disclose (on the event application form or otherwise) if your event involves any participation by government officials or candidates, so that any potential legal issues may be analyzed.

Respect in the workplace

The Center does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or retaliation of any kind. All events must be managed in a manner consistent with the Center's Respect in the Workplace policy. Any incidents can be reported through the complaint procedure outlined in that policy or in the Center's Whistleblower Policy.

Conflicts of interest

If any event might result (or even appear to result) in personal gain for a foundation trustee, officer, employee, or their respective family members, please notify thecenter@fordfoundation.org so that the Center can address any concerns.

Events sponsored by organizations affiliated with foundation trustees or officers go through a special approval process to ensure that potential conflicts are managed appropriately, so please disclose any such affiliations on your event application form.

Health and safety practices

As a visitor, we ask that you abide by our health and safety protocols, posted signage, and any guidance provided by onsite staff. We reserve the right to request that visitors who do not adhere to our guidelines leave the center.

Because COVID-19 remains highly transmissible, there is an inherent risk of exposure in any public environment. We request that you help us reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 and other respiratory and infectious diseases by rescheduling your visit if you have tested positive for COVID-19 or are experiencing symptoms, such as a cold, flu, or RSV. There are no vaccination, masking, or health screening requirements to visit the Center for Social Justice. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as needed.

Ford Your Safety

Cleaning protocols, air quality, and ventilation

Based upon guidelines and recommendations from the WHO, CDC, and our own team of medical advisors, the following health and safety measures have been implemented within our building:

- In line with the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers, our air ventilation system now provides appropriate air filtration, outdoor air quantities, ventilation, and 100% fresh air circulation.
- We use antimicrobial MERV 16 filters, which have the highest efficiency rating, and replace them monthly to ensure their effectiveness.
- Our custodial team wipes down all high-traffic, high-touch areas (e.g., restrooms, elevators, railings, door handles) three times a day, and cleans all other spaces once a day.
- Sanitizer is available throughout the building.

Exceptions

Tenant-hosted events are not subject to all of the above terms, and tenants may have special exceptions outlined in their lease.

Additional exceptions to the above terms can be made under special circumstances with written approval from the foundation.