



The Neil and Louise  
Tillotson Fund

# GRANTSEEKER GUIDE

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## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This Grantseeker Guide provides grant seekers with background and eligibility information, review considerations and instructions for applying to any of the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund's grant programs. The Table of Contents is hyperlinked for easy reference. You are encouraged to discuss ideas for a grant proposal with staff of the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund at any time. Please contact our staff at the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation; Christa Hollingsworth at (603) 263-8365 or [CH@NHCF.ORG](mailto:CH@NHCF.ORG).

# ABOUT THE NEIL & LOUISE TILLOTSON FUND

## PLACE-BASED PHILANTHROPY

Focused grantmaking and work in Coös County, NH and communities in New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont and the MRC de Coaticook in Québec, Canada that share a border with Coös County.

Neil Tillotson was an entrepreneur who, from the humblest beginnings in Beecher Falls, Vermont, built numerous companies that employed thousands of people in the region and far beyond. Louise Tillotson, his wife, was a force all her own — she had worked for the BBC, had once built her own house and her own business. They traveled the world, but always — always — came back to the North Country. During their lifetimes, they gave quietly and consistently and generously to hundreds of community efforts.

When he passed away in 2001 at 102, Neil Tillotson left the bulk of his assets for charitable purposes. Louise Tillotson then established the donor advised Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund at the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation in 2006. The Tillotsons' gift was among the largest charitable gifts in the history of the state. The fund is one of the largest permanent rural philanthropies in the country and is positioned to support Coös County, NH and bordering communities in perpetuity.

Over the years, the Tillotson Fund's goals and priorities have consistently reflected Mr. Tillotson's philosophy to "be humble, be creative, and be kind" and Mrs. Tillotson's guidance to "protect the land and help the people." In this spirit, the fund supports a wide range of community and economic development efforts to help revitalize the region. The work is guided by a local advisory committee and managed by a small team of staff who live in the region. Since 2006, the fund has made nearly \$50 million in grants, and has built the capacity of the region through community gatherings, leadership programs, network-building and deep community partnerships.

The Tillotson Fund's current [2022-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN](#) builds on the fund's deep and lasting commitment to place-based philanthropy, with a recognition that the work must be owned and led by the people. As the region grows and transforms, the Tillotson Fund will be guided by the principles of [TRUST BASED PHILANTHROPY](#) and build from a foundation of deep community connection to ensure that the philosophy and legacies of Neil and Louise Tillotson are embedded into the work.

The Tillotson Fund serves as a resource for the people of this region to forge their own pathways to well-being and cultivate a region that thrives.

# VISION, PURPOSE, AND PRINCIPLES

## VISION

The vision of the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund is to serve as a resource for the people of Coös County and neighboring communities in New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont and southern Québec to forge their own pathways to well-being and cultivate a region that thrives.

The Tillotson Fund serves as a stable and consistent source of support for the people of the region to:

- **CREATE AND ENHANCE OPPORTUNITY**
- **PRESERVE AND UPLIFT THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ASSETS THAT MAKE THE REGION UNIQUE**
- **HOLD THE CONFIDENCE AND CAPABILITIES TO FOSTER STRONG COMMUNITIES AND HEALTHY RURAL LANDSCAPES.**

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Fund is to engage with local communities to identify their short- and long-term priorities and invest in the ideas and initiatives which advance those priorities.

## CORE PRINCIPLES

Staff and an advisory committee work with community members to uphold the following principles of the fund, its work, and grantmaking.

### FOSTER POTENTIAL

The people in the region hold the knowledge and ingenuity needed to solve problems, create opportunities and build thriving communities. The fund aims to foster these strengths by supporting organizations and initiatives aimed at cultivating the entrepreneurial power, relationships and confidence that support self-determination and well-being.

### FOLLOW COMMUNITY LEAD

The resources of the Tillotson Fund are primarily dedicated to the people and communities of this region. The fund works shoulder-to-shoulder with people in the region to help direct these resources to priorities and initiatives that they have identified. The fund works to be inclusive of all community members in this process, including those who are often excluded from decision-making.

### CHERISH NATURAL RESOURCES

The natural landscape is one of the greatest assets of the region. The fund strives to be good stewards of the land, air and waterways, and to advance opportunities that strengthen human connection to the natural environment.

### CULTIVATE BELONGING

The fund is based on a deep respect for the diversity of life experience of the people in the region and aims to cultivate communities where everyone feels valued.

### TRUST IN EACH OTHER

The fund's intention is to build trust by prioritizing respect, humility, honesty and empathy in the fund's collaborations and interactions with partners and community members.

In addition to the principles and values of the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund, the Fund is guided by **“TOGETHER WE THRIVE,”** New Hampshire Charitable Foundation's strategic plan.

# COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

Our Commitment: Support community-identified and community-driven strategies and solutions.

Our Tools: Grantmaking, social impact investing, advocacy, convening and partnerships.



## Well-being for All

**Goal:** Support individuals and families to meet their essential needs and achieve well-being.



## Thriving Workforce

**Goal:** Strengthen the capacity of local employers to maintain and/or grow operations, build and retain a dynamic workforce, stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship, ensure business continuity and plan for the future.



## Healthy Environment

**Goal:** Address the impacts of climate change by investing in climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, responsible stewardship of natural resources and efforts that foster the human connection to the natural environment.



## Resilient Communities

**Goal:** Support initiatives and activities that build trust, belonging and connection and lead to stronger, more resilient communities.

# COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

## THE NEIL AND LOUISE TILLOTSON FUND

The Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund Community Investment Framework is a key component of our approach. We will focus our investments in four key areas:



### Well-being for All

**Goal:** Support individuals and families to meet their essential needs and achieve well-being.

- Meet essential needs for individuals and families.
- Strengthen systems of care.

**Strategic Priority:**

**A Whole Family Approach**

Expand early childhood development strategy to a “whole family” approach, further aligning investments with the work of partners to accelerate improvements in family and child well-being in Coös County.



### Thriving Workforce

**Goal:** Strengthen the capacity of local employers to maintain and/or grow their operations, build and retain a dynamic workforce, stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship, ensure business continuity and plan for the future.

- Attract and retain the workforce.
- Establish workforce housing solutions.
- Help companies and employees build skills and systems for sustained success.
- Link employers and employees to financial supports.
- Increase access to affordable quality childcare.

**Strategic Priority:**

**Invest in Workforce Housing**

Establish a workforce housing seed fund for planning and concept development of housing solutions; and a workforce housing investment fund for development and construction.



### Healthy Environment

**Goal:** Address the impacts of climate change by investing in mitigation and adaptation strategies, stewardship of natural resources, and efforts that foster human connection to the natural environment.

- Be good stewards of the land, air, forests, waterways and wildlife.
- Encourage/support responsible tourism and recreation.
- Build and enhance sustainable food systems.
- Promote, sustain and scale energy efficiency, clean energy and green building.
- Implement climate smart forestry solutions.

**Strategic Priority:**

**Protect Our Natural Capital**

Invest in environmental stewardship in recognition that preserving the region’s natural capital is crucial for a thriving economy and healthy communities.



### Resilient Communities

**Goal:** Support initiatives that build trust, belonging and connection and lead to stronger, more resilient communities.

- Empower youth.
- Convene, collaborate, celebrate.
- Build skills, knowledge and approaches to advance equity.
- Support community builders and change agents.
- Revitalize population hubs and preserve cultural and historical assets.
- Improve civic health.
- Strengthen municipal capacity and leadership.

**Strategic Priority:**

**Champions for Our Communities**

Hire up to three full-time Community Stewards who live in or near Coös County to serve as community champions and to help community members advance local priorities. Create the Community Builders Hub to strengthen the skills, confidence, motivation and connections of community builders.



Our investment areas are mutually reinforcing, guided by equity and informed by community.

Our Commitment: Support community-identified and community-driven strategies and solutions.

Our Tools: Grantmaking, social impact investing, advocacy, convening and partnerships.

# TILLOTSON FUND GEOGRAPHY

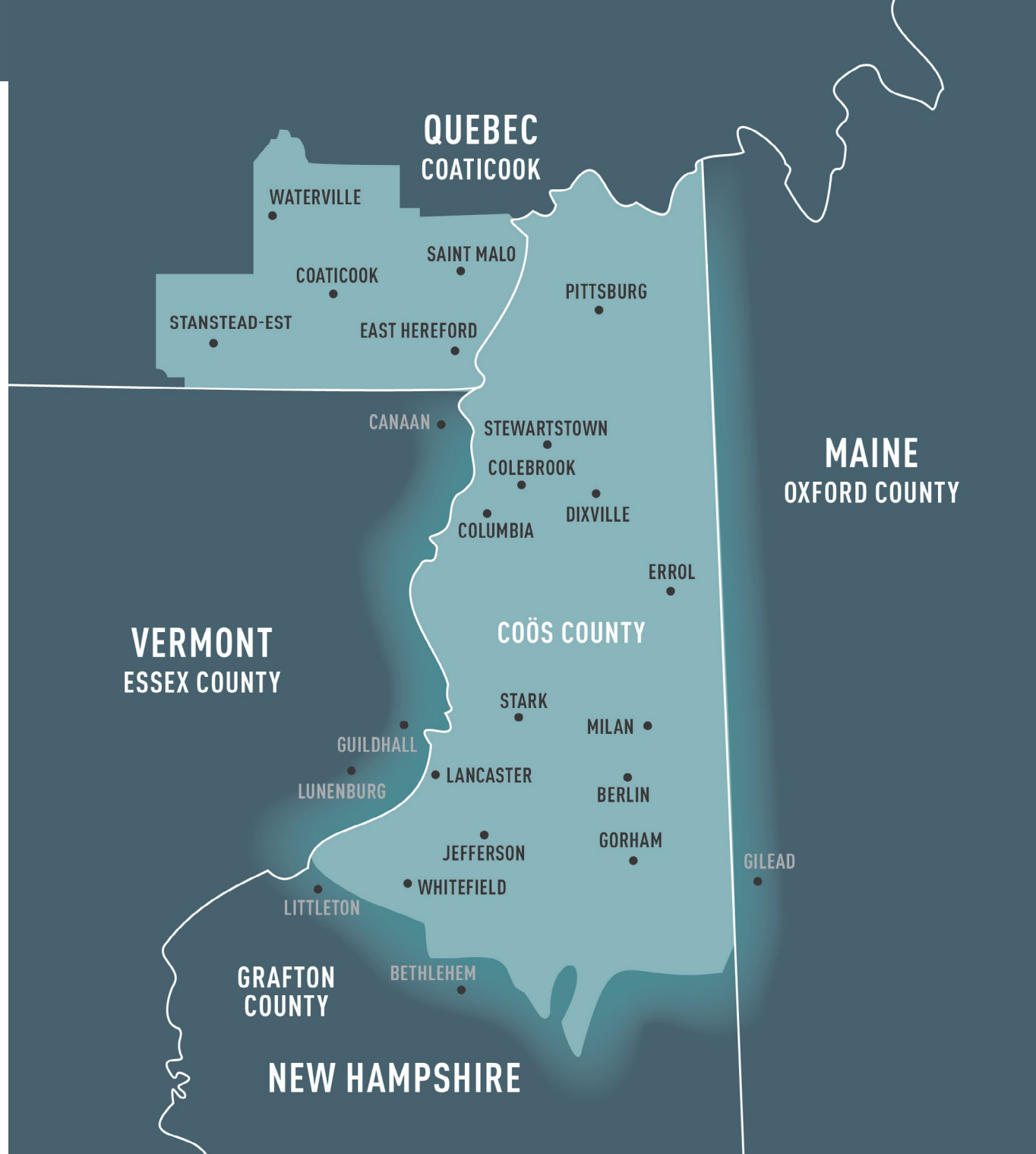
## ELIGIBLE GEOGRAPHY FITS INTO THESE KEY AREAS:

- ➔ Coös County, NH and communities in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont that share a border with Coös County -AND- MRC de Coaticook, Quebec, Canada
- ➔ Programs, projects or agencies that operate outside the region but offer clear benefit to the people or landscapes of Coös County, NH.

The larger the request, the more the organization or project needs to demonstrate a measurable impact in Coös County, NH.

### Not sure about geographical fit?

Please contact our staff at the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation; Christa Hollingsworth at [CH@NCHF.ORG](mailto:CH@NCHF.ORG) or 603-263-8365.



# GRANT PROGRAMS

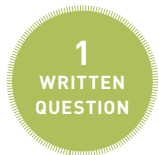
**3 WEEKS**  
TIMELINE

## DASH GRANTS

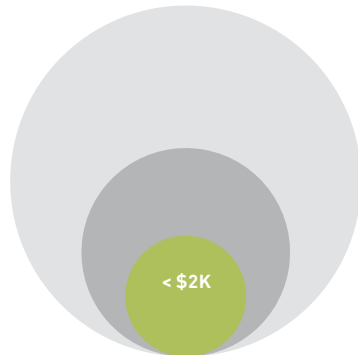
**DEADLINE:** Rolling deadline

The DASH grants program provides rapid grant awards ranging from \$250 to \$2,000 to eligible organizations. DASH grants are open to applicants based in the United States. There is an equivalent program in Canada, the [Coaticook Express Grant Program](#).

→ [APPLY HERE](#)



APPLICATION FORMAT



FUNDING AMOUNTS

**3 MONTHS**  
TIMELINE

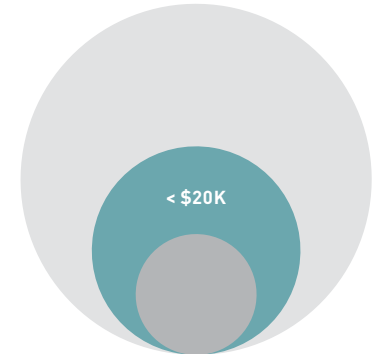
## LOCAL GRANTS PROGRAM

**DEADLINE:**  
Thursday, January 23, 2025 and  
Thursday, July 17, 2025

Requests \$2,001 to \$20,000. Proposals may include unrestricted and operating support, project support, and capital expenses.



→ [APPLY HERE](#)



FUNDING AMOUNTS



APPLICATION FORMAT

## LARGE GRANTS PROGRAM

**DEADLINE:** Rolling deadline

Proposals between \$20,001 and \$300,000, 1 — 3 year requests.

As requests increase in amount, the more involved the review process may be and more competitive outcomes.

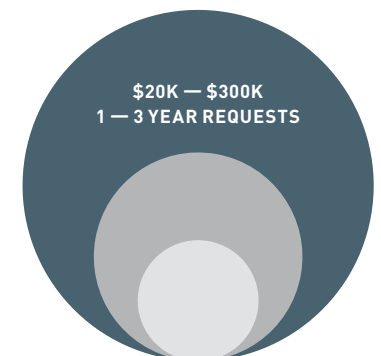
→ [APPLY HERE](#)



**2+ MONTHS**  
TIMELINE



APPLICATION FORMAT



FUNDING AMOUNTS

# TYPES OF SUPPORT

## OPERATING SUPPORT

### 1—3 YEAR REQUESTS

GENERALLY, REQUESTS SHOULD NOT EXCEED 30% OF THE ORGANIZATION'S OPERATING BUDGET FOR A SINGLE YEAR.

FLEXIBLE CAPITAL

## PROJECT SUPPORT

### 1—3 YEAR REQUESTS

FUNDS ADDRESS A SPECIFIC ORGANIZATIONAL OR COMMUNITY NEED, PROGRAM, TIMELINE, OR LOCATION.

## CAPITAL PROJECT CRITERIA

### PREFERENCE TO SUPPORT MIDDLE TO LAST DOLLARS

#### COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS INCLUDE:

- + MIX OF FUNDING SUPPORT
- + BUILDING PLAN THAT INCLUDES OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE PLAN
- + BROAD BASE OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT
- + COMMITTED STAFF & BOARD TO STEWARD THE PROJECT



# WHAT GUIDES OUR DECISIONS

The Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund provides stable and consistent resources as well as serves as an engaged and trusted partner to the people and organizations working to improve quality of life and the health of rural landscapes in Coös County and neighboring communities. The fund is committed to supporting community identified and community driven strategies and solutions. The fund holds a deep respect for the diversity of life experience of the people in the region and aims to cultivate communities where everyone feels valued.

In general, reviewers expect that as the scale and duration of a request increase so does the organization's ability to demonstrate growth and impact in each of these areas.

**These five review criteria are considered in grantmaking decisions:**



## INFORMED BY COMMUNITY

Recognizes that people in the region hold the knowledge and ingenuity needed to solve problems, create opportunities, and build thriving communities. Demonstrated authentic collaboration with the community members being served is a funding priority.



## GUIDED BY EQUITY

A thriving community is one where all members can fully participate and experience a sense of belonging. The fund prioritizes funding for organizations and projects working to remove barriers to accessing services and programs and/or addressing disparities in outcomes for all community members; with an emphasis on communities historically excluded and under-resourced.



## MEANINGFUL COLLABORATION

Lays the foundation for openness, connection and engagement in community. The fund prioritizes requests that can show meaningful collaboration and engagement with other organizations, nonprofits, businesses and municipalities.



## MEASURABLE IMPACT

Success in reaching goals of a grant proposal can take many forms. Applicants are encouraged to have well-thought out strategies and activities that result in positive change in the region, people's lives, environment, economy, and community. The fund seeks to support work that can demonstrate local and/or regional impact through reflection, data collection and learning and adapting over time.



## BROAD RANGE OF SUPPORT

Support from the community and financial sustainability are critical pieces of competitive grant requests. A diverse resource base including financial and in-kind contributions, as well as community leadership are examples of what is sought in all proposals.

# ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

**ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDE:** those recognized as tax-exempt by the IRS or CRA are eligible, including US nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) status, Canadian organizations with qualified donee status, tax-exempt public agencies, schools and municipalities. Other community groups and organizations which do not have US or Canadian tax-exempt status may apply for funding if a 501(c)(3) organization, municipality or public agency acts as their fiscal sponsor. Please reach out to the Fund's staff in advance of submitting an application. Members of the Donor Advised Committee should not be contacted regarding funding inquiries.

**EXCLUSION, DISCRIMINATION AND HATE POLICY:** The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation honors the fundamental value and dignity of all individuals, and will not knowingly make grants (including those recommended by donor advised fund holders), to organizations whose mission or programs promote hate, or run counter to principles of basic respect, justice and equity.

**STATE, COUNTIES, MUNICIPALITIES, AND SCHOOLS:** The Fund, generally speaking, does not make grants to support annual budgets for: Municipal, County or State Government, Public Schools, Charter and Private Schools. Examples of exceptions are included below. If you have any questions please contact staff.

- Public education should be fairly and fully funded by public monies. To that end, the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation/Tillotson Fund does not provide funding for K-12 operations, curriculum, capital projects, staffing, administration or programs. Funding for extracurricular activities or one-time events/activities may be considered.
- Likewise, municipal, county and state budgets should be resourced by public monies. The Fund may consider funding for projects or services that are one-time investments (eg, improvements to a public gathering space) and/or are supported through other philanthropic/non profit entities (e.g. Friends of the Library).

**RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS** are not eligible, unless all services being funded are clearly and distinctly non-discriminatory, non-sectarian and benefit the larger community. Religious organization eligibility may be determined in accordance with New Hampshire Charitable Foundation policies and practices. Visit [APPLY FOR A GRANT - NH CHARITABLE FOUNDATION](#) for more information on grant programs.

# APPLICATION CONSIDERATIONS

Please take the following information under consideration when exploring funding opportunities with the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund:

- Grant recipients may only have one active grant with the fund at a time; the exception is for the DASH Grants Program. Organizations may apply for a DASH grant in addition to any active grants received, but can only apply once per calendar year.
- Organizations can apply for a Tillotson Fund grant and a New Hampshire Charitable Foundation grant in the same year.
- The fund encourages applications for multi-year operating support. Generally, requests should not exceed roughly 30% of the organization's operating budget for a single year. That said, there may be exceptions which can be discussed with staff during the review process. For organizations operating beyond the geography of the Fund, consider 30% of the operating budget for services within the Tillotson Fund region.

Organizations will be provided ample feedback and recommendations if their proposal does not align with the priorities of the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund and the eligibility and review criteria outlined in this guide. In such cases, large grant applicants will not be invited to apply until more work has been done to incorporate staff feedback and ensure the proposal aligns with the requirements described in this guide. Local or DASH grants that are not aligned with the goals and priorities of the Fund will be declined. Organizations may submit a letter directly to the Tillotson Donor Advised Fund Committee via Christa Hollingsworth at [CH@NHCF.ORG](mailto:CH@NHCF.ORG) if they believe these actions were unwarranted. A written reply will be provided by the Tillotson Donor Advised Fund chair.

# APPLICATION QUESTIONS

All applicants must create or update your Organization Profile in the online system [GrantSource](#) before you will be able to access the application.

If you already have a profile in the system, please log in and update your information including contacts, mailing address, mission statement, # of employees, operating budget, and board of directors.

You may create or update your Organization Profile at any time; you don't need to wait until the application opens to begin this step.

## DASH Grants Application Questions:

- **About the Project:** Please describe your project including a narrative description, intended outcomes, community partners that might be involved, and any other information that might be helpful.
- **Budget:** Please upload a project budget (PDF format). Budget line items should not include operational expenses such as salary, benefits, rent, utilities, or capital expenses.

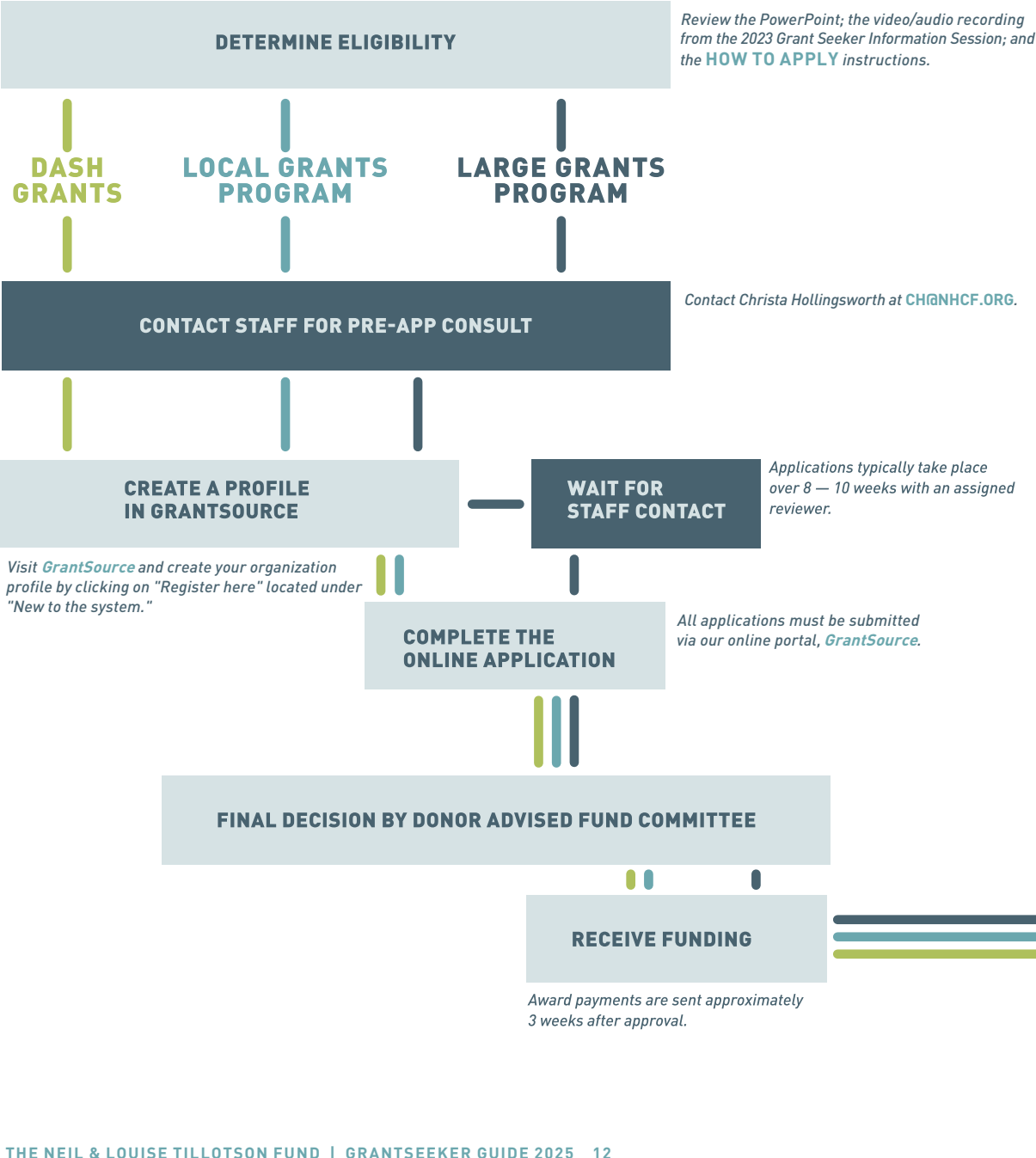
## Large & Local Grants Application Questions:

There are no word limits, but 300 words or less are encouraged.

- **Mission/Purpose Statement:** Please briefly state in one or two sentences the mission/purpose of your organization.
- **Organizational Impact:** What has been your organization's impact on its community or constituents in recent years?
- **Proposal Description** (*choose one, Tillotson staff can assist you in making a decision*):  
FOR OPERATING SUPPORT: How will the grant help your organization build organizational capacity and advance your goals and strategies?  
FOR PROJECT-BASED SUPPORT: Please describe your project including a narrative description, intended outcomes, community partners that might be involved, and any other information that might be helpful.
- **Additional Information:** Is there anything else you would like to share?
- **Budget:** For project-based requests, please upload your project budget. For operating support requests, the operating budgets available on the organization's profile will be reviewed.

# APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- PROCESS AT-A-GLANCE
- READINESS CHECKLIST
- REPORTING REQUIREMENT



# READINESS CHECKLIST

- Make a phone call to indicate interest and discuss proposal concept with staff
- Confirmed eligibility of my organization, including:
  - Geographical fit
  - Operating, project, or capital request
- Read Grantseeker Guide
  - Strong alignment with Community Investment Framework
  - Awareness of Principles That Guide Our Decisions
  - Partnerships and collaboration in place that support community-driven requests
- Build organizational profile in **GRANTSOURCE**
- Information for grantseekers in Canada in **FRENCH** and **ENGLISH**.
- Ready to apply? Organizations based outside of the United States should review these **DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS** for submitting your application.

## REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Staff want to make reporting accessible and manageable for all funding partners.

- Reports are required for awards from the local and large grants programs
- Reports should take 30–45 minutes to complete depending on the complexity of your work
- French speakers are welcome to submit in French, staff will provide the translation services
- Multiple formats for reporting are welcome (Eg: video, photo collage, website, interview with staff members)
- All of the options above fulfill the reporting requirement. Please contact staff with any questions.
- When publicizing your grant, please reference support provided by the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation.
- Staff also encourage you to share your story with us so we can help publicize your good work.