



Annual Central Grants Strategic Approach and Process

The Bermuda Foundation's central and unrestricted grants programme is run annually every year from April to June. Given that the Foundation receives grant requests in excess of \$400,000 annually, which exceeds our budget, we have designed a strategy for allocation.

We employ two tactics for soliciting grant applications:

- 1) Email notification to all registered charities, directly, using the Government's list and Facebook
- 2) Outreach to organisation working in priority areas based on our internal assessments and community knowledge. Nonprofits and community-based groups who receive a notification are advised that they have been pre-approved for a grant pending completion of a grant application. An offer for support in completing the grant requirements is extended.

Our grants docket is created in this way to ensure that BF maintains a comprehensive and proactive view of programmes operating in the sector. Applicants are required to complete a GiveBermuda profile.

Our Process

Grantmaking for a community foundation is like a puzzle; figuring out which programmes fit with each donor funds' criteria, each with a level of inter-dependence in making the best grants possible. In terms of the grant assessments, we use the following guiding criteria:

- Bermuda Vital Sign's classifications and a view towards social impact measurement, given the introduction of our work to Bermuda in these areas
- the quality of the application based on a short-hand version of our assessment criteria (clarity of purpose and intended impact).
- the budget/request of each application (a major 3rd sector shortcoming continues to be that we don't know the extent to which a programme is under or over-funded: nonprofits' fiscal years vary, as do funders'; grant solicitation is an ongoing process)
- what we can afford to do -- what are the best possible grants we can make to a programme while spreading limited funding across the Vital Signs areas

Worthy of note are the following considerations:

- 1) BF is committed to supporting two signature programmes/areas of work, which include standards of excellence and sector capacity building and to date, have resulted in support to two programmes:
 - a. the Beacon Awards Scheme through a special grant award made possible by a partnership between BF and The Atlantic Philanthropies Fund to acknowledge the commitment of not-for-profit agencies (nonprofit and public) who have earned BNSC certification or accreditation. Grants submitted by any of the BNSC-designated organisations are of a much better quality than most, having gone through extensive governance, compliance and service reviews.



- b. The Nonprofit Leadership Development Programme, a 3-part development opportunity for nonprofit leaders: Level I – Online course, *Introduction Nonprofit Certificate*, offered via the University of Wisconsin; Level II – *Nonprofit Management Programme* at Duke University; Level III – *Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders* at Stanford University. The programme is facilitated by YouthNet with administrative support provided by The Centre on Philanthropy.
- 2) Well-presented new programmes received a recommendation for some form of funding, from either the fund to which they directly applied or from the BF Central Fund.
- 3) Tough choices are often made. Some nonprofits are doing interesting work in areas that have not been prioritised by the community via the Vital Signs process nor they have not made the case for how their proposed activities will ultimately have impact or meet an evidence-based critical need.

Part of BF's work involves creating structures and system to ultimately improve sector efficiencies. As such, the grant application process is becoming increasingly streamlined. Grant applicants that do not receive funding initially are retained for consideration for opportunities that may present themselves throughout the year.

As always, decision-making processes for other donor funds may mean that more funds may become available throughout the year. If there is an opportunity for a programme(s) to be considered by a BF fundholder, we will advise the nonprofit or group.

Given the extraordinary budget challenges the sector faces, we are regretful that we cannot give more. The Bermuda Foundation continues to advocate for philanthropy and the kind of giving that sustains the sector, now and in the long term.