**FUNDING GUIDELINES**

**CHANGE, NOT CHARITY**

Chinook Fund provides critical seed funding and infrastructural support to grassroots community organizations working for social justice and human rights across the state of Colorado. Chinook Fund was established as a partnership of donors and activists in 1987 as part of the Funding Exchange Network**.** This laid the ground for a new kind of philanthropy where community members, who have experience working for social justice on the ground, lead decision-making around where funding will have the greatest impact for change. Since our founding, we have raised and distributed over $2.5 million in grants to 300 organizations throughout Colorado. There are many effective models for community work, but Chinook Fund prioritizes organizations that take a direct-action and community organizing approach to social change. We also often provide the first formal funding to many new and emerging organizations. Chinook Fund believes that oppression is at the root of most social issues, and that we must directly address issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc. in order for our work to be effective.

**KEY ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL CHANGE**

**CONSTITUENT-LED**

The work is led by the people most impacted by injustice. Unlike a traditional charity model, we believe that those most affected by the issue have the solutions and vision for their own liberation – and that the development of their leadership, skills, and power should be prioritized.

***Example:*** *An organization working on issues affecting youth should include youth leadership at all levels of the organization, and ensure that youth are at the forefront of deciding what issues they want to fight.*

**COMMUNITY-WIDE**

The work reflects all members of the constituency or community, especially those who experience multiple forms of oppression. This ensures that change for the community leaves no one behind, especially for those who have less privilege within the community.

***Example:*** *An organization fighting violence against women should include the leadership of women of color; lesbian, bisexual, and queer women; low-income women; transgender and gender non-conforming women; and women with disabilities to ensure that their work makes change for the entire community of women affected by this issue.*

**LASTING EFFECT**

The work makes change not just for one individual today, but for the community as a whole and for future generations. Generally, this means organizing collective action to change cultural, social, political, and economic systems and institutions (such as housing, criminal justice, food production, health care, government agencies, immigration, media, etc.)

***Example:*** *An organization working to challenge racist policies that exclude students of color from accessing high quality education – rather than an after-school tutoring program for students of color.*

Providing trainings and workshops are an important organizing tool directed toward social change, but Chinook Fund sees such programs as the beginning, not the end, of the social change process. Education expands and develops leadership, but such programs should also incorporate action that will lead to systemic change.

Chinook Fund will consider proposals that seek to create community-based alternatives to the systems named above, as long as there is demonstrated need, action and organizing for the alternative institution, as well as clear examples of change that will result for the community.

**COMMUNITY ORGANIZING**

Chinook Fund defines Community Organizing as:

the process of bringing affected people together to use their collective power to win improvements in their community and change the power structure to advance social justice.

**Components and examples of Community Organizing work:**

* Led by the people most directly affected by the issues the organization is working on.
* Continually builds leadership from within its own membership, base, or community.
* Works to understand and address the root causes of the issues, not just the symptoms.
* Brings people together to build power they wouldn’t have individually.
* Uses that power to create systemic change, which includes altering unjust power relations.
* Sees itself as a part of a larger movement for social change and works towards strengthening that movement.
* Has clear demands for systems or policy change that are backed by community support.

**DEFINITIONS OF CULTURAL ORGANIZING & HEALING JUSTICE**

Chinook funds many types of organizing work, organizationally we want to clarify our internal working definitions of Cultural Organizing and Healing Justice.

**Cultural Organizing** integrates arts and culture into organizing strategies. It is also about organizing from a particular tradition, cultural identity, community of place, or worldview.

**Healing Justice** is how oppressed communities holistically respond to and intervene on generational trauma and violence, and how they innovate collective practices that can impact and transform the consequences of oppression on their bodies, hearts, and minds.

**Please Contact Us for More Information:**

**CHINOOK FUND**

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**DENVER, CO 80205**

[**www.chinoofund.org**](http://www.chinoofund.org)

**office@chinookfund.org**

**303-455-6905**

**FUNDING GUIDELINES**

**All Successful Applicants Must:**

* Be based in communities facing injustice or oppression, including but not limited to communities of color, low-income communities, immigrant communities, LGBTQ communities, disability communities.
* Have democratic leadership, decision-making and organizing that is led by and accountable to people most directly impacted by the issue or injustice
* Be engaged in efforts to dismantle privilege and oppression within their organization and community
* Demonstrate that their work can lead to permanent progressive change for their community

**Priority is Given to Applicants Who:**

* Work in alliance and collaboration with other organizations
* Are strategic and work with a long-term vision that is clearly linked to current work plans
* Have achieved concrete successes that have positively impacted the community
* See themselves as part of a larger movement for social justice
* Have limited access to traditional funding sources
* Raise money from multiple sources, including grassroots/individual donor fundraising
* Shift paradigms and offer alternatives to existing institutions and systems that perpetuate injustice
* Take risks by doing work that is controversial, marginalized, and/or new and emerging
* Intentionally evaluate their work

**The Chinook Fund Does Not Support:**

* Direct services to individuals
* Groups with budgets over $350,000
* Individuals or organizations controlled by one individual
* Scholarship requests
* Profit-making organizations, with the exception of worker-owned cooperatives
* Other foundations or pass-through funding
* Organizations whose work or decision-making body is based outside of Colorado (with possible exceptions for regional indigenous groups)
* Attempts to influence the election of individuals for public office
* Direct union organizing

**Tax-Exempt Status**

Chinook does not require groups to have 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status in order to receive funding. However, the activities for which you are requesting funding must fit within the IRS tax-exempt eligibility requirements. Please contact staff if you are unincorporated or without a fiscal sponsor.

**General Operating vs. Project Support**

Chinook prefers to give general operating dollars to groups whose overall mission and work align with our criteria for social change. General operating dollars can be used for any organizational expense, including staff, equipment, rent, utilities, fundraising, or programming. However, if your organization has a specific program or project that needs support, which more strongly aligns with Chinook’s funding criteria, you may consider applying for project support. Please contact staff if you are unsure which type of support to apply for.

**FUNDING GUIDELINES**

**START-UP GRANTS Maximum: $4,000**

Groups that are less than 4 years old are eligible to apply for start-up grants. Groups must demonstrate a vision and plan for meeting Chinook Fund criteria, but do not need a proven track record of success.

**ESTABLISHED GRANTS Maximum: $10,000**

Any group may apply for an established grant, but the competition for grants is tougher, as it includes groups that have been working successfully on social justice issues for a number of years.

Applications will not be moved from Established to Start-Up after submission. If you are unsure which grant to apply for, please contact staff.

**MULTI-YEAR GRANTS 2 Year Terms**

Established grantees who have been funded by Chinook at least twice during the last 5 years, and who receive the highest level of funding in the current cycle, will be considered by the Giving Project Cohort for multi-year funding.

Awardees will be offered funding for a second year without having to go through the full application & site visit process. Awardees will be required to submit a progress report and updated financials for the second year of funding. Please Note: we cannot guarantee the same dollar amount for the second year award due to the way we allocate funding.

**GRANTMAKING PROCESS**

**Deadlines**

The Chinook Fund runs two grantmaking cycles every year. **Spring Cycle:** Applications are due **February 21st** and grants are awarded in June. **Fall Cycle:**  Applications are due **September 21st** and grants are awarded in February. Groups may receive only one grant percalendar year.

**Before Applying**

Because our funding guidelines are so specific, we strongly encourage you to attend our **Grant Application Workshop**, offered one month before each grant deadline. This workshop provides an in-depth review of our funding criteria and an opportunity to ask questions.

If you cannot attend this workshop, we urge you to discuss your ideas with staff before the deadline to determine whether your work fits our priorities. Please note that staff may offer assistance and support, but do not ultimately make funding decisions.

**Giving Project Cohort**

All funding decisions at Chinook are made by our Giving Project cohort, led by community-members who are invested in social justice issues & movements and represent the diverse communities and issues we fund. Giving Project cohort

members review all proposals, conduct site visits,

and make funding decisions using a consensus-based process.

**Site Visits**

Site visits are a critical part of the Chinook application process, and are weighed heavily in funding decisions. For Chinook, it is important that the largest possible number of constituents, members and leaders are present at this meeting.

**Funding Allocation**

After deciding which groups meet our criteria, the Giving Project Cohort divides grant dollars amongst all grant recipients. The dollar amount of our grant awards varies from cycle to cycle depending on the number of grant recipients and the amount we have been able to fundraise.

**Final Reports**

Chinook grantees are required to submit a Final Report after one year. Report forms are mailed to all grantees one month before they are due. Grantees who do not submit a Final Report will not be eligible for future funding.

**OTHER CHINOOK GRANTS**

Chinook also offers **Technical Assistance** and **Critical Respons**e grants. Please contact staff or visit our website: [www.chinookfund.org](http://www.chinookfund.org) for more details on fund availability and how to apply.