

- **When is the open grant cycle?**
September 1st - September 30th
- **When is the drop deadline date?**
The Norfolk Southern Foundation must receive all completed electronic applications by 11:59 p.m. E.S.T. on September 30th. Incomplete electronic applications and/or proposal packages received by this deadline WILL NOT be considered for funding.
- **Can an organization submit an RFF hard copy by mail instead of online?**
No. Grant proposals and applications will be accepted ONLY through our web-based platform. RFF'S MAILED TO AND RECEIVED BY THE NSF OFFICE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.
If you have a special situation that prevents you from submitting an electronic application, please contact the NSF Executive Director via email at katie.fletcher@nscorp.com. Please allow up to two weeks for a reply. Special considerations exempting an organization from online applications will not be considered after September 15th of each year.
- **How can I get a copy of the application form?**
Printed versions of the application form are not available.
- **When will I be contacted about the status of my grant?**
Decisions will be made by December 31 for the following year's discretionary funding program. Notifications will be made by email early in the following calendar year.
- **How do I know you received my proposal?**
After completing your online application and selecting "Submit" in the Review and Submit section, a system-generated email confirming receipt will be sent to the address provided in the "Contact" area of the application.
- **In our RFF, to whom should we address the proposal?**
Katie Fletcher
Director Corporate Social Responsibility
- **What requirements are necessary in the package?**

Electronic requests must include the following:

- ◆ Valid email address
- ◆ A valid 501(c)(3) or 170(c)(1) letter from the IRS - tax-exempt status will be electronically verified as part of the on-line application procedure
- ◆ A short request outlining objectives of organization, project and intended use of funds
- ◆ Board of Directors Listing
- ◆ Sources of funding (current and potential)
- ◆ Last 3 years of IRS 990 filings
- ◆ Budget for proposed project (if applicable)
- ◆ Comprehensive budget for requesting organization
- ◆ A valid email address and contact phone number for person that can answer any questions with regard to RFF

- **What is the timeline once package is received?**

September

An email will be sent advising package has been received if valid email has been submitted. Please do not call to see if package has been received.

October - December

Packages will be reviewed by the Vice President and Executive Officer and the Executive Director of the Foundation. If questions arise, the Executive Director will reach out to the noted contact person. Cuts will be made during these months and organizations will be notified if they have been cut via email.

December - January

Final decisions will be made by the Vice President and Executive Office and the Executive Director of the Foundation and all notifications will be by made by email no later than January 31st. These decisions are final.

- **Can an organization request a meeting to review their proposal?**

Due to the volume of requests submitted, face-to-face meetings or conference calls are not set up. The Foundation office is staffed by only the Executive Director. The Executive Director will answer questions preferably via email at katie.fletcher@nscorp.com or by phone 757.629.2881.

- **Can organizations apply if they have received funding in prior year from Norfolk Southern Foundation?**

The answer is yes.

- **What are the current focus areas of the Foundation?**

Education Focus is primarily at post-secondary level schools which offer Business and Engineering degrees, and some early childhood literacy programming.

Environmental Programs Conservation efforts related to land, air or water use which complement NS corporate sustainability initiatives. Exceptions will be made here to territory with a focus around our facilities.

Health and Human Services

Focused on organizations serving families with children.

- **What types of organizations will not be accepted?**

- ◆ Organizations not in the NS territory (must be served by Norfolk Southern to be considered)
- ◆ Organizations that do not have a 501(c)(3) or 170(c)(1) IRS letter
- ◆ Individuals or organizations established to help individuals
- ◆ Religion-affiliated organizations
- ◆ Fraternal, social, military or veterans organizations
- ◆ Political or lobbying organizations
- ◆ Public or private elementary and secondary schools
- ◆ PTA groups or any public or private school affiliated club, organization, event or activity
- ◆ Fundraising events, telethons, races or benefits
- ◆ Amateur, civic, or professional sports or athletic organizations, clubs or activities
- ◆ Community or private foundations, or other organizations that merely redistribute to other eligible organizations aggregated contributions
- ◆ Disease-related or health-focused organizations
- ◆ Non-teaching hospitals (projects must be educational in scope and community focused)
- ◆ Mentoring programs
- ◆ Boy and Girl Scouts programs or similar organizations
- ◆ Animal organizations
- ◆ Non-US based charities & initiatives
- ◆ Organizations whose programs have an international and/or national scope
- ◆ Civic leagues
- ◆ Referral or consulting agencies and organizations

- **How does an organization know if they are in Norfolk Southern territory?**

Here is a link to our [territory map](#). If you are served by a short line railroad, you are not in an eligible territory for funding. For those areas that show a dotted line on map, this refers to areas not directly served by Norfolk Southern, but rather a haulage agreement and is not considered Norfolk Southern territory for funding purposes. If you still have questions about eligibility based on your location, please email the Executive Director (katie.fletcher@nscorp.com).

- **Are local United Way agencies and Feeding America foodbanks eligible for funding?**

No. Foundation contributions are made to United Way agencies and Feeding America foodbanks within Norfolk Southern's territory, but there is no application procedure for these; contributions are made based on the Norfolk Southern employee population in a given community.

- **Can a new organization with less than 3 years of financials apply?**

Norfolk Southern Foundation prefers that organizations be established and operating for three years under the organization's current EIN in order to demonstrate financial stability and proven success prior to funding.

- **My organization is identified as a non-profit by my state. Is that the same as the IRS 501(c)(3) documentation?**

No. Receiving an IRS 501(c)(3) designation is a Federal tax-exemption. The organization must have completed the appropriate forms and filed them with the IRS to receive this ruling. Check with your accountant regarding the IRS status of your organization.

- **The IRS has determined my organization is a 501(c)(4) but we do charitable work. Can we apply?**

No. There are numerous 501(c) designations in the IRS Code. Norfolk Southern Foundation only accepts requests from 501(c)(3) public charities.

- **May I apply for a grant for a specific project on behalf of another organization, which does not have a 501(c)(3)?**

No. Law prohibits the Foundation from granting funds to one qualified organization that in turn provides the funds to an unqualified organization.

- **Does Norfolk Southern fund grants for general operating support?** The answer yes.

- **What level of funding would be considered?**

Grants are sent in requesting funding anywhere from \$1,000 to \$50,000. Those organizations that receive high dollar amounts tend to be organizations that Norfolk Southern Foundation has a strong relationship with currently or has in the past.

The Foundation considers the Norfolk Southern presence in the organization's service area as well to determine level of appropriate funding. Based on the past several years, the average grant was less than \$10,000.

- **Will my nonprofit receive the amount requested?**

Your grant may be declined or it may be selected for funding, either as submitted or for a different amount. Due to demand on NS Foundation resources, awards for fully requested amounts are unrealistic, especially for requests beyond our average grant amount.

- **What factors determine funding selection?**

In addition to an organization meeting minimum eligibility requirements, the Foundation considers:

- ◆ The Norfolk Southern presence in the organization's service area
- ◆ The organization's mission in relation to Norfolk Southern's corporate creed, strategies, and current initiatives
- ◆ Other/multiple funding partners being utilized by the organization
- ◆ Historic and future viability of organization
- ◆ Type and purpose of proposed project – does it serve to build and strengthen capacity, increase impact and outreach efforts, allow more effective and efficient operation, etc.
- ◆ Ability of the organization optimally leverage monies received to obtain additional funding
- ◆ Organization's collaboration with other local non-profits and/or programming to enhance services without duplication
- ◆ The NS Foundation does not provide leadership gifts or support requests for which they are asked to be the sole funder.

- **Does NSF prefer a specific grant format?**

No. Any standard format is acceptable, as NSF is more interested in the proposal content than the format. Grants written for other funding sources are eligible for submission, given the pertinent specifics are changed to reflect NSF's criteria and guidelines. Applicants must submit all requested items within the online grant system in order for the application to be considered complete.

NSF cannot stress enough the importance of submitting a well-written, clear and concise grant proposal which summarizes critical information, highlights relevant data (facts, stats, figures), and presents a strong case warranting Norfolk Southern's support. Please note that the NSF office receives a multitude of varying requests each year and RFFs that are brief yet complete and do not include unnecessary information are greatly appreciated.

- **How many grants are actually funded each year?**

Exact numbers or percentages change yearly depending on the number of grants submitted, the types of grants submitted, funding amount requested. This is a very competitive process as the demand far exceeds the Foundation's resources.

- **If the organization is denied funding, may the organization receive feedback on the application?**

Denial is not necessarily a reflection on the quality of the grant request or applicant organization. The volume of funding requests received precludes providing individual critiques of unsuccessful requests.

- **Does Norfolk Southern Foundation provide in-kind or transportation grants?**

No. Norfolk Southern Foundation does not award in-kind gifts of land, structures, equipment or materials from Norfolk Southern or grants amounting to free transportation moves. In certain circumstances and events, NS departments other than the NS Foundation handle such matters.

- **Does Norfolk Southern provide sponsorships outside of the grant process? If so, what is the process for submitting a proposal?**

Norfolk Southern does sponsor certain events in our territory. The eligibility requirements above still hold true. While there is no formal deadline for corporate sponsorships and you may submit sponsorship requests via email to the Executive Director (katie.fletcher@nscorp.com) at any time, NSF appreciates sponsorship requests proposed well in advance of the event as Norfolk Southern's corporate budget is set one year prior. Please note that hundreds of requests are submitted yearly. Factors considered in sponsorship requests include relationships with charitable organizations, community impact, appropriateness of funding level, and timing of requests.

- **What if a college or university is looking for college partnership money, does the school need to submit a formal application?**

No. Although funding does come from the Foundation for the College Partnership program, these funding decisions are made by the Human Resources group. This funding is based on their relationship to school and their recruiting efforts.

- **What if an organization is looking for Local Discretion money given by a division, does the organization need to apply?**

NO, this funding cannot be applied for through the NSF office. Local Discretion giving is entirely separate from the NSF Grant program and nominations for this funding are generated internally amongst local NS Divisions.

Norfolk Southern values its relationship with first responders and other civic and community organizations across our 22-state territory and established the Local Discretion giving program, in part, to recognize and support such groups. The Local Discretion grant program is a dedicated, Division-based contributions program that helps promote community goodwill, diversity, and safety awareness at the local level. This program enables Norfolk Southern to enhance relationships with the communities in which our employees work and live, and allows local NS facilities and employees to take credit for good corporate citizenship.

The program supplements rather than replaces the traditional funding programs of Norfolk Southern Foundation and enables Division representatives to "personalize" corporate contributions. An IRS-designated 501(c)(3) organization, a 170(c) municipality entity (cities, towns, counties, etc.) or a department of such a municipal unit (i.e. fire, police, and volunteer fire departments) qualifies for funding under our Local Discretion Grant program. Beyond this initial requirement, there are certain other qualifying criteria an organization must meet.

NSF encourages Local Division representatives to give back to those organizations with which they have working relationships and partnerships. As such, we do not provide contact numbers for local Division representatives, but suggest qualifying organizations interested in Local Discretion grant funding make contact with those local NS employees with whom they have professional affiliations or connections. In that this funding CANNOT BE APPLIED for, please do not contact the NS Foundation in regards to eligibility.



- **Suggestions**

- ◆ Apply earlier rather than later.
- ◆ Do not submit request late as it will not be considered.
- ◆ Submit a complete application as incomplete applications will not be reviewed.
- ◆ Do not try to fit your organization in to a category if it clearly does not fit. Do proper research prior to applying
- ◆ Do not submit a lot of extra information unless pertinent to the request as it will not be reviewed.
- ◆ Review the [Norfolk Southern Contribution report](#) posted on the NSF website, which highlights areas of giving.
- ◆ Review NSF's FAQs and Grant Guidelines posted on our website.
- ◆ Save password when signing into grant management system

- **Who can I contact if I have questions not covered here?**

If you have additional questions call or email NSF. Please make certain that you have reviewed all the information available on the NSF website prior to calling.