



Membership Eligibility Guidelines

Mission and Vision

Our Mission: The Southeastern Council of Foundations serves, connects, strengthens and champions philanthropy and philanthropic infrastructure in the South.

Our Vision: Our vision is to be a vibrant network, inspired, nurtured and led by SECF, serving as a valued resource to philanthropy in the South.

Overview

The *Southeastern Council of Foundations* (SECF) is one of the nation's largest regional associations of grantmakers, serving more than 330 of the most dynamic foundations and corporate giving programs in the South. SECF works in partnership with members in 11 Southeastern states to serve, strengthen, promote and champion the South's philanthropic voice and infrastructure through engaging programming, leadership development training, access to unique resources and invaluable connections. By encouraging insightful philanthropic collaboration, SECF creates opportunities to increase the region's grantmaking impact and empower transformational community change.

General Criteria

Grantmaking organizations must meet the following criteria to be eligible for membership with the Southeastern Council of Foundations:

- A prospective member's core interest in joining SECF is a desire to improve the quality of its own grantmaking, to improve the field of grantmaking, and to support the people, communities and nonprofits in the South.*
 - As such, the organization will not use its membership to solicit donations, market itself, or otherwise seek benefits other than those stated in SECF's mission.
 - The organization agrees to abide by and be held accountable to the SECF's Statement of Principles and Code of Conduct.
- A significant portion of the prospective member's mission is to make charitable grants and/or awards to unaffiliated entities in its service area.*
 - The organization accepts solicited and/or unsolicited applications, within its funding priorities.
 - The organization does not restrict its giving solely to subsidiary chapters, member organizations, or affiliates.
 - The organization makes at least two grants annually to organizations with which it is not affiliated.
- The organization is not directly governed by a governmental entity.*
 - The organization is governed by an independent board not controlled by a unit of government or by a governmental agency.
 - The organization's grantmaking and other decisions are made by the board (or by a group designated by the board) and not directed by a unit of government or by a governmental agency.
 - Funding for the organization may come from a governmental entity, but the organization's decision making and leadership must be largely independent.
- Grants totaling at least \$25,000 are made annually to non-affiliated grantees.*

If the above criteria are met, applications for membership will be reviewed by the SECF Membership Committee comprised of staff, current members, and SECF trustees. Final recommendations are submitted to the SECF Board of Trustees for final action. SECF reserves the sole right to determine an organization's eligibility for membership.

If at any time an existing Member fails to meet or comply with these guidelines, it may be removed from Membership in the SECF.

Member Categories

As a reference, SECF typically considers the following types of grantmaking organizations for membership:

- Bar Association Foundations.** A foundation typically created by and related to a state or local bar association to support legal services for the poor, to improve the administration of justice, to promote professionalism in law

practice, to aid children involved in the justice system, to advance the legal system through historical study, and for other similar charitable purposes.

2. **Community Foundations.** A public, grantmaking foundation which serves a geographically defined region; has a broadly defined mission to serve and improve the quality of life within its region; is supported by a broad range of donors within its community; and is governed by a local board reflective of its community.
3. **Corporate Foundations and Giving Programs.** Either:
 - I. A private, grantmaking foundation whose assets are derived primarily from the contributions of a for-profit business, or
 - II. A grantmaking program established and administered within a profit-making company. (i.e. grants are made directly to charitable organizations from the corporation).
4. **Donor Advised Funds.** A fund held by a community foundation or other public charity (which itself is not otherwise a member), where the donor or representatives of the donor recommend charitable grants from the fund.
5. **Giving Circles.** A pooled fund that makes charitable grants and is managed and directed by the fund's donors.
6. **Grantmaking Public Charities.** An organization (other than a community foundation) that receives its financial support from a broad segment of the general public and makes charitable grants.
7. **Health Legacy Foundations.** A foundation created from the sale, lease, merger, or other disposition of the assets of a nonprofit health care entity (hospital, health system, health plan, or specialty care facility) and which makes charitable grants to support the health and other needs within the community which the health care entity previously served.
8. **Operating Foundations.** A foundation that uses a substantial portion of its income for the direct conduct of programs.
9. **Philanthropic Individuals.** An individual or family engaged in significant charitable grantmaking without the use of a formal, organizational structure – such as a foundation or a donor advised fund – for their giving.
10. **Private & Family Foundations.** A private, grantmaking foundation typically created with funds derived from a single source (such as an individual or family) and managed and directed by its own trustees or directors.
11. **State and Local Associations of Grantmakers.** A membership group of organizations and individuals who practice philanthropy in a specifically-defined geographic area. Eligibility is typically determined on a case-by-case basis, and provided that the association:
 - I. has 501(c)3 tax exempt status;
 - II. maintains a governing Board of Directors; and
 - III. is not a member of the Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers.

The benefits of membership are offered only to the organization's staff and Board of Directors (and not to the underlying members of the association).

12. **Supporting Organizations.** Organizations created for charitable purposes under the oversight or control of another organization, typically a community foundation. Supporting organizations qualify as a public charity (and not a private foundation) because it has a close relationship with another publicly supported 501(c)(3) organization. These organizations must meet the eligibility guideline requiring prospective members to provide charitable support to two or more unrelated external organizations on an annual basis.