Online Application Instructions, Tips for Applying and FAQs

Camber Foundation's application process is completely **online**. We hope to provide you with the tools, resources and guidance for your successful use of the online system.

Online Application Instructions

Before you get started, here are some things to know.

1. You will first **create an account for your organization**. The system will walk you through each screen step-by-step with information that will be required. Some helpful tips:
    - Have your nonprofit's federal tax ID (EIN) available. This is used for identifying your organization.
    - Enter your organization's correct contact information, including mailing address, which may be used for grant payments, if your organization receives a grant.
    - You will be asked if you are the executive leadership contact (e.g. President, CEO, Executive Director). If not, that is fine, but you will be asked to also enter the contact information for that person at your organization.
    - The email address you use when setting up your account is also very important. The email will be your username for logging into the system and will be the email to which important communications will be sent during the process, such as confirmations of submitted documents.
        - It is also helpful, especially when first engaging with the system, to check your email's spam/junk email folders when expecting an email from our system. Occasionally such emails initially land in those email inboxes, until you acknowledge that the email should not be marked as "junk."

2. The preferred browsers for the online system are **Mozilla Firefox** and **Google Chrome**. You will have the most success with using the system if using one of those browsers.

3. Please note that when submitting forms via our online system, such as applications and grant reports, you will be occasionally asked to upload certain documents. The system does **not** support Apple product file types such as .numbers, .pages, etc. It is critical to upload supported file formats. Those **supported file formats will be noted within the application, when an upload is available, such as .doc, .xls, .pdf (MS Word, Excel documents, PDFs, etc.).**

4. Once you have set up your online account, you may **start applying for funding opportunities**!
    - It is critical to thoroughly read the posted Request for Proposals (RFP) to which you are applying/responding. The RFP will contain important guidelines and eligibility criteria specific to that opportunity. In addition, it may contain information such as an **access code** that will be needed to access the application form, once you are logged into the online system.

5. Once logged in, you should land on your **Applicant Dashboard**.
    - At the top of the screen, you should see menu selections, including an orange Apply link. Click the orange Apply link.
    - The screen will refresh. At the top of the new screen, you will see a box where you will enter the access code. Type in the access code precisely as it is provided in the RFP. It will be case sensitive. There should not be any blank spaces entered before or after the code.
    - Once you have typed in the code correctly, click the Enter Code button.
    - The page will once again refresh. Scroll down the screen and you will see reference to the application. There will be a summary of the application and the dates during which applications will be accepted. If the application is currently open, there will be a blue Apply button beside the application.
    - Click the blue Apply button to access the application form.

Tips for Applying

Tips for completing an application in the online system.

1. It is helpful to read all instructions throughout the application carefully before applying, to familiarize yourself with the layout and what information will be required.

2. The system will have instructions throughout related to what is expected for answering the questions, along with character limits for narrative responses. It is important to note that the system uses character, and not word, counts for determining limits on your responses. Spaces are counted as characters. Please note that the limits are maximum allowed limits on characters. You should not feel like you have to fill a response to the maximum allowed limit. If you are able to fully express your response in less space than is the maximum allowed amount, that is fine!

3. There will be some places where you will enter responses within tables that are provided in the application form itself such as budget information. For those responses, you will not have to upload separate documents.

4. You may save your application form and return to it at a later time to finish and submit. Don't forget to come back online, complete and submit the application prior to the publicized application deadline. There will be a Submit button at the bottom of the page. Click that when you are ready to submit. You will receive a system-generated email confirmation of your submitted application. Be sure to check your spam/junk inbox if you don't promptly receive a confirmation as the email may have landed there.

5. If you are coming back to submit your saved application at a later time you will simply log back into the online system. You will not have to go back through the steps above of clicking Apply and entering the access code. Your previously started and saved application will be waiting for you on your Applicant Dashboard!
    - From your Applicant Dashboard, scroll down the page and you will see your saved application that was previously started.
    - There will be a blue Edit Application link beside the application. Click that to reopen the form, complete and submit.

6. At any time, after you have submitted the application, you may also go back to your Applicant Dashboard and find the application. The blue link will no longer say "Edit" and will instead say "View Application" (since it was submitted, and you are no longer able to edit after you submit). You may click View Application to reopen your application, should you want to review any information you submitted, and/or to print a copy of the application. Once you reopen the application form, there will be a button toward the top of the page labeled Application Packet, with an Adobe PDF icon. Click that button to open a PDF file. You may save that to your computer and/or print the full application you submitted.

7. As always, let us know if you have questions along the way, and we are happy to help!

Tips for writing the application.

1. Make sure that you are answering all required questions in the application, and also answering the question that is asked – being both thorough and direct to what is being asked.

2. Before addressing the specific questions within the application – think about whether you can answer the "Who? What? When" Where? Why? and How?" of your work. If you can answer those, you will likely have the information that is being sought within the questions of the application proposal.

3. Practice answering the questions, perhaps out loud to yourself or to someone else in order to gauge how it sounds – is it appealing?

4. When possible, you should also include both compelling descriptions of your work as well as more solid, technical information. In other words, are you telling the story in a compelling, narrative way, while also supporting it, when possible, with data and numbers to back it up?

5. Try steering clear of industry specific jargon and acronyms. Assume that the reviewers reading your proposal do not know anything about your industry and the jargon used daily within your field. Speak clearly, as if telling someone you think does not have the background experience you have with your work.

FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. **Q: Our organization is classified by the IRS as a tax-exempt nonprofit, but not designated specifically as a 501c3 public charity. Are we eligible to apply?**
   - A: No. Eligible tax-exempt nonprofit organizations are those with the specific classification from the IRS as ***501(c)(3) public charities***. The IRS classifies tax-exempt nonprofit organizations into several categories. Those eligible must fall within the 501(c)(3) classification (***not*** 501(c)(4), 501(c)(6), etc.) and must further be designated by the IRS as a public charity within the 501(c)(3) classification. Your organization's IRS Determination Letter of tax-exempt, nonprofit status will detail whether or not your organization has this classification. Other designations within the 501(c)(3) classification, such as private foundations, are not eligible for funding from this program.
2. **Q: What does it mean that an eligible organization must be "located in" the defined 41-county Eastern North Carolina geographic area?**

- A: In addition to serving at least one of the 41 counties in the Eastern NC geographic area as described in the Request for Proposals, organizations eligible for this grant opportunity must also have a physical location/presence in the Eastern NC region. An organization's headquarters may be outside of the region, but to be eligible they must have either a location/office within the 41-county region from which they regularly operate, or at least have staff living and working in the region. This grant program not only prioritizes the Eastern NC region but also community engagement and solutions that are community-driven. As such, the program is designed to support organizations with local presence.

3. **Q: I see that the request for proposals allows for funding to support either general operations or a specific program or project. What are the differences between the two types of support?**
    - A: General operating support is unrestricted funding an organization uses for its operations and which allows the organization to continue to operate and meet its overall mission. This support may be used for any cost the organization has which keeps it operating, unless otherwise restricted at the time of grant issuance. Whereas program or project support is funding that an organization is using for a specific mission-related program or project. This funding must be used for that program or project within the organization, which has clearly defined goals. Grant funding may be used for any direct or indirect costs related to the funded program/project.
4. **Q: Are there specific types of expenses that a grant will not cover?**
    - A: There are not necessarily specific types of budget line items that a Camber Foundation grant will not cover, as long as the expenses are not for a purpose that is restricted from funding. In other words, if the proposal supports one of the following restricted purposes, then the expenses would not be eligible, because the purpose of the grant would not be eligible.
        - Grants to government entities, churches or schools (including colleges and universities)
        - Grants to individuals
        - Political purposes/activities or campaigns; or lobbying, including advocacy that is for the purpose of influencing legislation
        - Fundraising activities for endowments, capital campaigns or sponsorships
        - Reimbursement or loan repayment
        - Re-granting programs
        - Programs that are either restricted to members of a particular faith, or which promote religious doctrine
5. **Q: The request for proposals states that funding for capital campaigns is ineligible. Our organization has some capital expenditures for which we would like to seek funding. Are those eligible?**
    - A: The restriction is specific to planned or active capital fundraising campaigns only. Expenditures not associated with an active or planned campaign may be eligible.
6. **Q: What is meant by the term "re-granting program?"**
    - A: Re-granting refers specifically to a case where a grantee plans to use the grant funding to facilitate its own grantmaking program to other charitable organizations. Some organizations, however, provide financial assistance to individuals in need in their community based on an application process which is part of their core mission and operations. Exceptions may be made for this type of work, depending on the specific circumstances.
7. **Q: What are examples of good goals and measurable outcomes for an organization's proposed work?**
    - A: You will see that the application is designed so that the narrative questions of the proposal build upon one another. You will be asked what the need is in your community as related to Camber's funding priorities, what your organization will do to address that need, how you engage the community and the people that are involved in the work. Then, you will be asked about the goals and outcomes you have related to this proposed work. It is important here that

you connect the dots. The goals and outcomes should directly relate back to the work you are doing to address the identified need and also directly show the impact and benefit to the community you are serving. In other words, the goals and measurable outcomes should be those you envision for community members' benefit.

8. **Q: How might our goals and outcomes be different if we are applying for general operating support?**
   - A: Your goals and outcomes will be related back to your organization's work as a whole. However, they will still need to reflect how the work will benefit the community you serve. As an example, when thinking about general operating support, we understand that you may have an intended outcome of adding a specific position to your staff. However, we are interested in the goals and the outcomes you are envisioning that adding that staff person will have on the impact and benefit to the community and population(s) you serve.

Additional tutorial videos for using the online system may be found here.