



SISTERS *of* CHARITY FOUNDATION
OF SOUTH CAROLINA

2026 Grants Overview

Welcome



Donna Waites
President

Mission

In response to God's call and the spirit of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, the Foundation strategically uses resources to reduce poverty through action, advocacy, and leadership.



Values

- *Courage*
- *Compassion*
- *Respect*
- *Collaboration*
- *Justice*
- *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging*

A Word of Prayer



Ericka Wooten

Director of Culture & Values

Our New Strategy



Dr. Melinda Merrell

Senior Director of Grantmaking & Strategy

2026-2028

STRATEGIC PLAN



SISTERS *of* CHARITY FOUNDATION
OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Strategic Plan Inputs

Research & Lived Experience

- *Structural Factors Associated with Poverty* (2020)
- USC Poverty Study (2024)
- Mpowrd Poverty Study (2025)



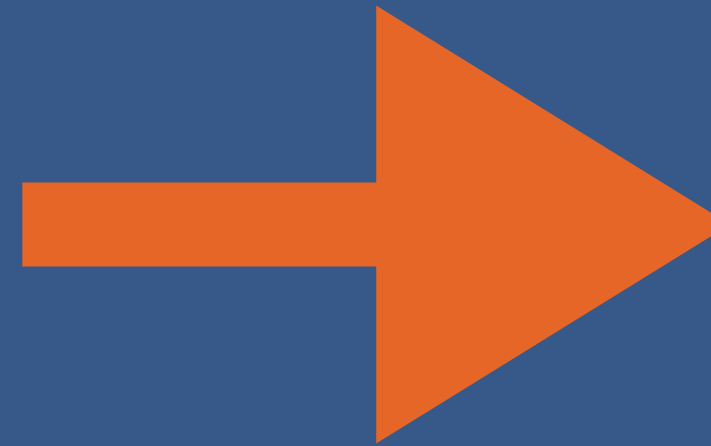
Stakeholder Feedback

- 16 partner interviews
- Matthew Desmond event surveys and group feedback



Internal Reflection

- Staff biweekly meetings
- Monthly board planning committee sessions



Systems Change



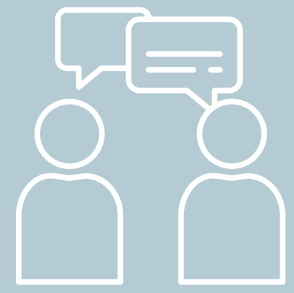
Economic Mobility



Housing Security



Health Care



Deeper relationships with partners



Focused, targeted advocacy efforts informed by community



Fewer grants with larger grant amounts



Targeted narrative change efforts to frame poverty as a systemic issue



Continued partnerships with broader anti-poverty network of organizations for deeper impact on root causes of poverty

What These Changes Mean Moving Forward





With a commitment to shifting power, advancing equity, and building mutually accountable relationships, **trust-based philanthropy** positions funders as collaborators working alongside nonprofits to meet the needs and dreams of communities who are most removed from conventional power structures.



<https://www.trustbasedphilanthropy.org/what-is-tbp>

New Grant Categories

Systems Change Grants

Supporting nonprofits addressing economic mobility or housing security

Available January 20, 2026

Health Care Systems Change Initiative Grants

Supporting nonprofits in invitation-only HCSCI cohort initiative

By invitation only

Community Engagement Grants

Supporting nonprofits with event sponsorships, outreach, and other emerging needs in our three focus areas

Available January 20, 2026

Capacity Building Grants

Supporting nonprofits with capacity building for systems change in our three focus areas

Anticipated in 2027

Who & What We Fund



Nonprofit organizations or coalitions that are addressing poverty in South Carolina



Work addressing economic mobility, housing security, or health care



General operating expenses



Work led and informed by communities

Who & What We Do Not Fund

- ✘ Organizations that do not address poverty
 - ✘ Activities that do not support South Carolina
 - ✘ Capital campaigns
 - ✘ Scholarships
 - ✘ Work that does not address economic mobility, housing security, or health care
 - ✘ Organizations that have been operating for less than one year
 - ✘ Individuals
-

We Encourage Applicants Who



Are grassroots, or led by community members who understand the specific needs of their areas



Serve people/communities of color



Are located in and/or primarily serving at least one SC persistent poverty county

(Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Clarendon, Colleton, Dillon, Hampton, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Orangeburg, and Williamsburg)



Systems Change Grants

Fund **organizations and coalitions** that are working to change the **policies**, **power structures**, and **mindsets** that cause and reinforce poverty in South Carolina.



Support activities in the Foundation's focus areas of economic mobility and/or housing security



The aim is to generate a larger impact through more intentional funding, highly focused work, and alignment across our Foundation's activities.



At the **local** or **regional** level: **\$75,000** max award annually

At the **state** level: **\$100,000** max award annually

Systems Change Grants



A system is an interconnected set of parts working together as a single entity to serve a purpose in society. When one or more parts of a system are shifted, redesigned or transformed through long-term action led by the people most impacted by it, the system begins to operate in a way that better serves all individuals in society. Groups historically and currently excluded from systems stand to benefit the most from this change through movement toward fairness, justice, and equitable outcomes.

Importantly, society as a whole also benefits substantially.



Address

**economic mobility
or housing security**



Economic mobility is access to resources that improve economic status and opportunities over a lifetime [i.e., a living wage, employment, benefits, training, assets, and power to make choices (e.g., through labor market supports)].

Housing security is access to stable, safe, and affordable housing.

Systems Change Grants Categories



**Participating
in advocacy
and lobbying**



**Affirming
the dignity
of people
experiencing
poverty**









**Addressing
unequal
power**



**Implementing
big impact,
scalable, or
innovative
solutions**

Funding Systems Change vs. Individual Assistance

Potential efforts funded through Systems Change Grants	Individual assistance no longer funded...
 Tenant organizing	 Rent or utility assistance for individuals
 Development of living wage legislation	 School-based programs that prepare youth for workforce
 Statewide infrastructure that expands a program's impact to more people	 Single site program development / implementation

Community Engagement Grants

Support outreach, events, trainings, workshops, celebrations, and other activities that serve and engage communities experiencing poverty.



Support activities in one of the Foundation's focus areas: economic mobility, housing security, or health care



One-time or occasional activities that engage communities experiencing poverty



Up to \$1,500

Beyond the Funding



Connections to other partners



Trainings and technical assistance



Data and evaluation support



Advocacy engagement



Continued relationships


2026 Grants Process



Ashlee McGandy
Grants Manager

Inquiry Checklist

LATEST & LEARNING

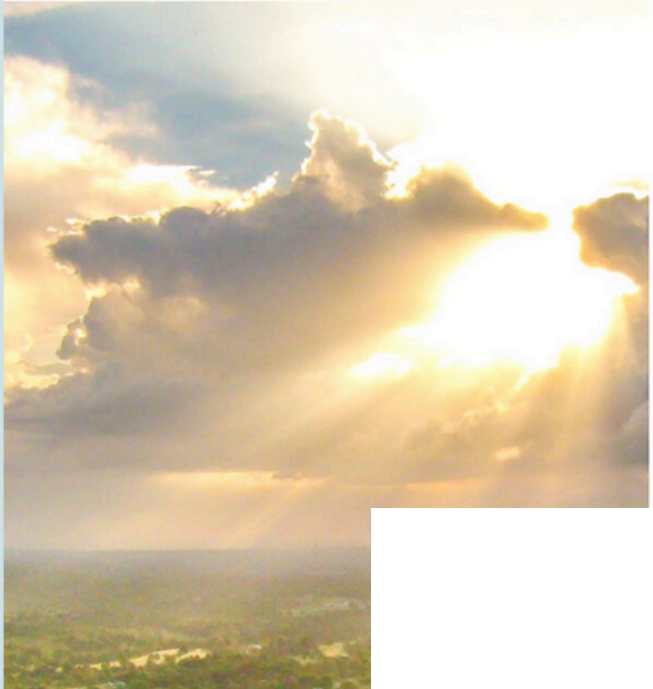
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OF SOUTH CAROLINA

ABOUT DEI&B ADVOCACY GRANTS IMPACT

Grants

Through our grantmaking, we support nonprofits that serve South Carolina at local, regional and state levels to address root causes of poverty while honoring the dignity of every South Carolinian.

Starting in 2026, our grants focus primarily on **systems change** in the areas of **economic mobility, housing security** and **health care** (with health care grants by invitation only). By focusing our efforts and going deeper on these three issues, we aim to have an even greater



Eligibility

Organizations must meet all the requirements in our Inquiry Checklist to be considered for funding.

[VIEW CHECKLIST](#)

Inquiry Checklist Questions

- ✓ SCFSC mission/values alignment
- ✓ Nonprofit status
- ✓ Serving SC communities
- ✓ SCFSC focus area alignment
- ✓ Fully operating one year+
- ✓ Follow Together SC guiding principles
- ✓ Collaboration/partnerships
- ✓ Adherence to lobbying limits
- ✓ Detailed operating budget
- ✓ Approaches informed by research, best practice models, and communities served

Systems Change Grants

Ready to Apply?

Could your organization or coalition be a fit for the Systems Change Grants? Learn more.

Additional Funding Considerations



Application Process and Timeline



Selection Criteria



Systems Change Grants

Additional Funding Considerations

All grants are for one year, with the possibility of renewal up to three years based on meeting reporting requirements and the availability of funding. The Foundation intends to award Systems Change Grants to up to 20 organizations a year.

Organizations cannot receive both a Systems Change Grant and a Community Engagement Grant from the Foundation in the same year. Organizations ARE eligible to apply if they have an open 2025 grant from the Foundation.

While these are not application requirements, we strongly encourage applications from organizations that are:

- Grassroots, or led by community members who understand the specific needs of their area.
- Impacting people/communities of color, in order to address systemic racism as a root cause of poverty. SCFSC will consider this criterion alongside the applicant's service area demographics and other factors.
- Located in and/or primarily serving at least one of the following 12 persistent poverty counties in South Carolina: Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Clarendon, Colleton, Dillon, Hampton, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Orangeburg, Williamsburg (based on U.S. Census definition).


Systems Change Grant recipients will be expected to participate in grantmaking activities of the Foundation, including attendance at events as requested, engaging in visits with Foundation staff and submission of required grant reports.

Systems Change Grants

Application Process and Timeline

If you think your work fits within the goals of the Systems Change Grants, we'd love to hear from you! Here are your next steps:

1. Review our [Inquiry Checklist](#) and make sure you meet our basic eligibility requirements.
2. Submit a Letter of Intent to apply when the form opens on January 20, 2026.
 - In the meantime, you can [preview the LOI and application questions](#) via the grants portal.
 - Only one LOI per organization will be considered per funding round.
3. Within six weeks, you will receive feedback from the Foundation and, if invited to apply, a link to the application.



Preview the LOI and
application questions on
our website!

Systems Change Grants

Letter of Intent to Apply & Application

LOI questions include:

- Key organizational information
- Area(s) of focus
- Type(s) of systems change
- Model for change
- Impact on communities
- Community input
- Partnerships

Application questions include:

- Short-term goals
- Long-term goals
- Barriers
- Organizational learning
- Financial information and budget

Grants Portal



SISTERS *of* CHARITY
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OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Logon

Email Address*

Password*

Log On

Create New Account

[Forgot your Password?](#)

Welcome to the Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina's online grants portal.

Before logging in, please review the [grants information on our website](#) and determine which grant you are applying for.

When you are ready to submit a Letter of Intent or apply:

- **New users:** Please click on "Create New Account" to complete the registration process and create your log-on credentials.
- **Existing users:** Please enter your credentials and log in. If you forgot your password, please use the "Forgot your Password?" link to the left to reset your password.

Tutorials: We use the Foundant Grant Lifecycle Manager (GLM) for our grants portal. If you need technical assistance, see [Foundant's video and written tutorials](#) or email Ashlee McGandy, the Foundation's Grants Manager, at amcgandy@sistersofcharitysc.com.

Portal “Apply” Page



Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina

Are there multiple people working on your request? Click here to learn [How to Use Collaboration Feature](#)

2026 Systems Change Grant

Opens
01/20/2026

Preview

2026 Community Engagement Grant

Opens
01/20/2026

Preview

Systems Change Grants

Selection Criteria

LOIs and applications are reviewed by Foundation staff and approved by our Board of Trustees. When selecting which grant proposals to fund, the Foundation considers:

1. An application's individual score based on the rubrics below, and
2. The full portfolio of high-scoring applications.

By considering all applications together, the Foundation can ensure our grants are not unfairly concentrated in one focus area, in one geographic region of the state, etc.

Evaluation Rubric for Letters of Intent

Rated out of 10	High (8-10 points)	Medium (4-7 points)	Low (0-3 points)
Foundation Mission and Values Alignment	The LOI aligns with SCFSC mission and values.	The LOI somewhat aligns with SCFSC mission and values.	The LOI does not align with SCFSC mission and values.
Systems Change Alignment	The proposed work falls directly within the Foundation's definition and categories of systems-level change.	The proposed work <i>could</i> have an effect on systems, but key information is missing.	The proposed work does not align with the Foundation's definition and categories for systems change.
	The proposed work falls directly within the focus	The proposed work could have an effect on	The proposed work has an indirect or no connection to

Systems Change Grants

Timeline

	Round 1	Round 2
LOI Deadline	March 24	August 4
Award Notifications Sent to Applicants	Week of June 22	Week of October 26
Grant Start Date	August 1	December 2

Community Engagement Grants

Application questions include:

1. Key organizational information
2. Area(s) of focus
3. Activity description
4. Community input
5. Budget

Reporting requirements:

- None

Community Engagement Grants

Timeline

	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
Application Deadline	March 16	June 1	October 5
Award Notifications Sent to Applicants	Week of April 6	Week of June 22	Week of October 26
Funded activities should take place before...	October 31	January 31, 2027	May 31, 2027

Q&A



What questions do you have for us?

Thank you!

Technical questions?

amcgandy@sistersofcharitysc.com

(803) 254-0230 ext. 12



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