



# Robison Foundation for Jewish Elders

## Applicant Guide

This document was created to help your organization prepare a strong grant application.

*The mission of the Robison Foundation for Jewish Elders (RFJE) is to enhance the lives of elders in our Jewish community by supporting their social, spiritual and physical well-being.*

Our commitment to the community is to build an enduring organization grounded in thoughtful, responsive grantmaking practices. Through our work, we strive to strengthen and support older adults and their caregivers by fostering meaningful partnerships, active engagement, and collaborative solutions that create lasting impact.

Over the past year, we conducted a *comprehensive community needs study* and engaged in deep listening with community members, service providers, caregivers, and stakeholders. What we heard clearly was a *need for stronger coordination, greater access to trusted resources, meaningful social connection, and proactive support for elders and their families*. These insights are shaping a new framework for our grantmaking priorities and guiding how we invest in the future of our community. As a result of this learning process, our funding priorities are now centered around four key pillars:

**Navigation & Access:** We support approaches that assess the needs of older adults and connect them with trusted partners who can ease navigation and improve access to care.

**Social, Emotional & Spiritual Connection:** We invest in programs that foster meaningful relationships, reduce isolation, and strengthen trusted connections within the community.

**Financial Support:** We assist organizations by providing funds that address the ongoing and urgent financial needs of elders, in alignment with our mission, board priorities, and donor intent.

**Early Outreach & Education:** We advance proactive outreach and educational efforts that help older adults, caregivers, and providers build awareness, confidence, and support before needs become urgent.

RFJE will consider funding proposals for up to three years and encourages applicants seeking multi-year support to request reduced funding amounts in the second and third years (“step-down funding”). For approved multi-year grants, RFJE will commit to funding for the full proposed term, contingent on annual reporting requirements and on agreed-upon criteria and conditions established by RFJE and the applicant to assess the program’s progress. We look forward to partnering with organizations that are ready to imagine bold solutions and help build a stronger, more connected future for elders in our Jewish community.

## Grant Application and Funding Process

### Eligibility

- Applicants must be qualified charitable nonprofit 501[c][3] organization or tax-exempt religious organization as determined by IRS regulations. If you are a fiscally-sponsored organization, please contact us before you begin an application process.
- Synagogues may apply for grant funds for projects to serve older adults, but proposals must demonstrate intentional, non-traditional engagement that exceeds routine services.
- Organizations may submit only one stand-alone grant application and may submit up to three additional grant applications in collaboration with other organizations in Greater Portland and SW Washington.
- Applicant organizations or collaborators need not be Jewish or Jewish-affiliated, but programs or services must prioritize or directly serve Jewish seniors.
- Programs may serve both Jewish and non-Jewish seniors, provided Jewish participation is documented at 75% or higher.
- Grant funds must be expended within 12 months or less of award allocation, or longer with permission. Upon project completion or up to 12 months from notification of award, grantees must submit a Final Report. To apply for additional funds within one-year of a grant award, a progress report will be requested.
- Collaboration with other aligned non-profit organizations in a joint grant application is encouraged. Funds will be awarded to the lead applicant who will also be responsible for measured outcomes reporting.

### **Ineligible for Funding:**

- Applications will not be accepted from individuals.
- Unrestricted general operations are not eligible for funding in this grant cycle.
- Projects which are for political purposes, capital campaigns, or for-profit ventures will not be funded.
- Projects seeking funds for costs usually covered by insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid are highly unlikely to be funded.

You must submit a full grant application before the deadline. No exceptions will be made for late applications. Organizations are strongly encouraged to contact Robison Foundation Executive Director, Sonia Marie Leikam at [soniamarie@rfje.org](mailto:soniamarie@rfje.org) to schedule a phone session before submitting the full grant application to discuss your proposal and to strengthen your application.



## Review Criteria/Rubric

The Grant Review Committee will review each application thoroughly. The criteria below provide an overview of the key elements that the committee will be assessing as they review your application.

Criteria	Key Questions	Score Range
<b>1. Quality &amp; Creativity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the proposal address one or more of RFJE's priority areas?</li><li>• Are the project leaders and partners well-qualified?</li><li>• If continuing an existing program, is there evidence of past success?</li><li>• Is the program practical, innovative, and feasible (considering space, transportation, accessibility)?</li></ul>	1–5
<b>2. Community Benefit &amp; Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How many Jewish elders (and others) will be served?</li><li>• Does the project foster collaboration with other agencies/organizations and create efficiencies?</li><li>• Will there be meaningful, long-term benefits for elders and the community?</li></ul>	1–5
<b>3. Planning &amp; Organizational Capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is the project clearly described with clear, measurable goals and objectives that match project activities?</li><li>• Does the proposal explain how this program will specifically reach Jewish seniors/caregivers?</li><li>• Does the organization have the infrastructure, experience, and staff capacity to deliver?</li><li>• Can funds be implemented within the next year?</li><li>• Is there a track record of success (if previously funded)?</li></ul>	1–5
<b>4. Budget &amp; Financial Stewardship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is the budget realistic, responsible, and does it align with the project's scale and impact?</li><li>• Is the quality and quantity of community impact commensurate with the dollars requested?</li><li>• Could the project succeed if partially funded?</li><li>• Does the applicant have additional resources or other funding sources including in-kind support?</li></ul>	1–5



## **Scoring Guide:**

1 = Weak / missing information

3 = Adequate but could be stronger

5 = Excellent, fully meets or exceeds expectations

## **Tips on Grant Writing**

### **What are Goals?**

We would like you to think of your goal as an overall statement of what you wish to accomplish, i.e. the final impact or outcome that you wish to bring about. This should link back to the overall problem described in your proposal. Consider using words such as “reduce,” “decrease,” “create,” “improve,” and/or “increase.”

Example 1: Decrease the number of Jewish seniors suffering from social isolation in Washington county.

Example 2: Increase the ability of homebound Jewish seniors to maintain their physical strength, balance, and mobility.

### **What are Objectives?**

Objectives are specific, measurable/quantitative, and have a timeframe.

For example:

- “By December, 2026, at least 40 older adults will each have received at least 50 personal points of contact to reduce social isolation.”
- “By March 30, 2025, clients in the program will indicate a 50% increase in their ability to access needed resources for medical care.”
- “By the end of December 2023, at least 35 Jewish seniors will be engaged as community educators and will lead over 250 hours of courses or workshops in their areas of specialty.”

Suggestion: By May 2027, 70 seniors will have [important achievement].

### **How to create the Project Budget**

Consider using your organization's existing template for generating project budgets, but here are the types of things we would like to see included:

#### **Revenues for the project, such as:**

- donations from individuals (total combined dollar amount)
- donations from corporations/sponsors or other grant funders
- Government grants
- In-kind donations with estimated dollar value
- fees your organization will receive as part of the program (i.e., if clients or participants pay any tuition, ticket or fees as part of the services provided)



- funds your organization will internally contribute to the project out of its existing budget
- Loans or other financing

**Expenses for the project, such as:**

- Staff time- Only calculate the percentage of staff time specifically working on this project. If the project appears to be an activity that is part of your organization's standard activities, it may not be funded. Make sure to indicate if you will need to hire any staff specifically for this project and if relevant, include titles/project roles of staff.
- Supplies, materials
- Transportation and/or delivery
- Food costs related to the project
- Professional services for program (therapists, speakers, educators)
- Professional services for operating program (legal, accounting, consulting)
- Space (rental, improvements/modifications, construction) specific to the program
- Equipment
- Operations (prorated to the project, and/or for upgrades necessary to implement the project)
- Insurance (if project specific)
- Staff training, professional development (if project specific)
- Postage
- Marketing/advertising



## Types of Funding Available

### **Professional Development Grants**

**Up to \$1,000 of matching funds | Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, with decisions made quarterly.**

These grants support the professional growth of staff members or teams at grantee organizations by helping offset the cost of skill-building and career development opportunities specifically related to their work with elders. Funding is intended to strengthen organizational capacity by investing in people—enhancing their knowledge, leadership abilities, and effectiveness in their roles.

Both individual applicants and teams are encouraged to apply, particularly when the proposed development activity will have a clear and lasting impact on organizational performance.

Grants are awarded on a matching basis, requiring the applicant or organization to contribute an equal amount of funding support. This is a reimbursement-based grant with receipts required.

**Eligible Uses:** Conferences, workshops, trainings, courses, certification programs, and related learning opportunities

### **1: ChikChok (“Fast Track”) Grants**

**Up to \$3,000 | Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, with decisions made quarterly.**

Supports time-sensitive and immediate opportunities that benefit elders.

These grants are intended to:

- Respond to emerging needs or unexpected opportunities
- Fund short-term programs, events, or pilot activities
- Provide quick-turnaround support with minimal administrative burden

### **Track 2: Nitzan” (“Blossom”) Grants**

**\$5,000–\$20,000 | 2 cycles per year**

Supports early-stage ideas and modest program expansions.

These grants are intended to:

- Pilot new concepts with room to grow
- Expand existing programs in a limited but meaningful way
- Bridge the gap between small, rapid-response funding and larger investments

### **Track 3: Kadimah (“Moving Forward”) Grants**

**\$20,000–\$50,000 per year, multi year commitment possible | 2 cycles per year**

Supports growth, innovation, and capacity-building to better serve elders.

These grants are intended to:

- Launch new programs or expand existing ones
- Address identified community needs or service gaps
- Invest in strategic planning, infrastructure, and organizational capacity

**Track 4: Kulanu (“All of us”) Grants- LOI**

**\$50,000+ per year, multi year commitment possible | 2 cycles per year**

Supports cross-organizational collaboration to create lasting, system-level impact. Supports significant program growth, innovation, and capacity-building.

These grants are intended to:

- Fund collaborative, multi-organization initiatives
- Address systemic challenges and service gaps
- Focus on sustainable, community-wide solutions

Please keep your Letter of Inquiry concise (no more than 2 pages) and clearly demonstrate alignment with our funding priorities. Include a brief introduction to your organization, outlining your mission and relevant experience, and describe the need or opportunity your work addresses with supporting data where possible. Summarize your proposed project, including goals, target population, and key activities, and articulate the expected impact along with how you will measure success. Provide a rough estimate of expenses, including the amount requested and how funds will be used (a detailed budget will be requested if invited to apply), and briefly address how the work will be sustained beyond our support.

