

# Funding Guidelines & Application

The Chinook Fund was established in 1987 to support the efforts of grassroots organizations working for human rights, economic justice, and peace, through social change. We believe that oppression and privilege are at the root of most social issues. In order to be effective, we must directly address issues of race, class, gender, culture, sexual orientation, age, and ability/disability in all our work.

Chinook works with groups that are often too new, too risky or too radical to receive funding from more main-stream sources. It provides seed funding, technical assistance, and networking opportunities to organizations. Like other non-profits, we raise the money that we give away in

## Mission Statement:

*The Chinook Fund is committed to the transformation of society into one that promotes social justice and freedom from oppression, including but not limited to racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, and ableism.*

grants every year. Our grants are not large in amount, but frequently they represent the first formal funding a group receives. Please give us a call at 303-455-6905. We work extensively with community-based groups to help them grow stronger. We invite you to use us as a resource for your organization.

There are many effective models for community work. Chinook funds organizations that take a direct-action approach to social change.

At Chinook we identify social change as efforts that strive to include certain key elements.

If we have the capacity to endure, if we have the patience, things will change... Together, all things are possible.

Cesar E. Chavez

## Key elements of social change:

**Community-wide** The change will affect all members of a community. A community could be, for example, all immigrants, all transgender people, all Latinos, or all low-income people in a particular neighborhood

**Constituent-led** The work is driven by the people it affects.

**Lasting effect** The work affects not just people today but members of the community in future generations. Generally, this means that the work is directed toward permanently changing a system, institution, or policy.

## Some examples:

Rather than funding direct services such as an after school program to give students of color additional academic support, Chinook funds groups that are challenging racist policies that exclude students of color from access to high quality education.

Providing trainings and workshops can be organizing tool directed toward social change, but Chinook sees such programs as the beginning not the end of the social change process. Education expands and develops leadership, but such programs should also incorporate action that will lead to structural change.

Chinook believes that viable strategies for social change are designed and controlled by the people affected by them. Because of this belief, we fund constituent-led organizations. An example of a constituent-led organization might be a youth empowerment program designed by youth, with youth involved in all levels of decision-making.

**All successful applicants must:**

- Be based in communities of color, low-income communities or other oppressed communities
- Be constituent-led (have leadership and decision-making that reflects the whole constituency based on age, gender, race, class, ability, etc.)
- Demonstrate that their work can lead to permanent progressive change for their community

**The Chinook Fund does not support:**

- Direct services to individuals
- Groups with annual budgets over \$350,000
- Individuals or organizations controlled by an individual
- Scholarship requests
- Profit-making organizations, except worker-owned cooperatives
- Other foundations or pass-through funding
- Organizations whose work is based outside of Colorado or whose decision-making body is based outside of Colorado (with possible exceptions made for regional indigenous groups)
- Attempts to influence elections of individuals for public office
- Direct union organizing

**The Start-up Fund** was created to support organizations just beginning their work. Groups applying for grants from this fund will, therefore, not be competing for grants with more established organizations. Grants of up to \$4,000 are awarded. The following are criteria for applying for a start-up grant:

- The organization or group must have been in existence for 4 years or less
- An organization can be funded only twice in the Start-up category, not necessarily in consecutive years.

**The Established Fund** supports groups with grants up to \$10,000. Any group may apply for a grant in this pool, but the competition for grants is tougher, since this pool includes groups that have been working successfully on social justice issues for a number of years.

*Neither staff nor Grantmaking Committee members will move an application from the Established to the Start-up category, even if a group is eligible for Start-up funds.*

**The Grantmaking Process**

The Chinook Fund is controlled by activists who make all decisions about the organization. A diverse committee of activists and other community representatives reviews the proposals and decides which to fund. First, proposals are reviewed by the volunteer co-chairs of the Grantmaking Committee. They decide which proposals meet the Chinook guidelines, and those proposals are sent to the full Committee. The Committee reads the proposals and then spends a full day discussing them and deciding which to visit. The site visit gives your group an important opportunity to meet with two committee members and share your work and ideas with them. *It is important that the largest possible number of constituents be present at this meeting.* Your site visit must be wheelchair accessible. After the site visits, the Committee meets for another full day to discuss the site visit and decide which proposals to fund, and at what level. Their recommendations are then submitted to the Board of Directors for approval.

**How to Apply**

Because our funding guidelines are so specific, we strongly encourage you to discuss your ideas with staff before the deadline to determine whether your work fits our priorities. Our telephone number is 303-455-6905.

All applicants are required to answer each question in the Proposal Narrative outline, complete the Cover Sheet and Diversity Chart, and provide both organization and project budgets, income (continued)

statements, and balance sheets. Please use the attached Proposal Checklist to ensure that all application requirements are met. Incomplete proposals will not be considered.

### Deadlines

The Chinook Fund considers applications in two cycles each year; fall and spring. **Applications must be postmarked by August 21st for the fall cycle and February 21st for the spring cycle.** *Late proposals will not be accepted.* Notification of grants awarded in the spring cycle will be in June, and in the fall cycle, notification will be in December. Groups may receive only one grant per calendar year.

### Tax-Exempt Status

The Chinook Fund does not require groups to have tax-exempt status in order to receive funding. However, the activities for which you are requesting funding must fit within the Internal Revenue Service's eligibility requirements for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations. If you have any questions regarding the eligibility of your project, please call our office at 303-455-6905.

### Required Reports

Chinook grantees are required to provide a report after one year. Report forms are provided by the Chinook Fund.

### Other Chinook Funding

**Technical Assistance Grants** - Groups that receive Chinook funding in a cycle are eligible to apply for a grant of up to \$1,000 for training or technical assistance. TA Grants are intended to assist groups in building skills and infrastructure that will support the sustainability of the organization.

**Critical Response Grants** - Grants up to \$1,000 are made to enable groups to respond to unforeseen or developing public events. They are not made to alleviate financial difficulties. Please call the Chinook Fund at 303-455-6905 for more information about Critical Response and TA grants.

### Narrative

**Please use these headings and respond completely to all parts of the following questions.** Please limit your response to five typewritten, single-spaced, single-sided pages. You should use no smaller than 12-point font and .5 inch margins.

**1. History** - When did your group come together and why? What have you done? Tell us about your recent activities, successes, and failures.

**2. Organizational Structure and Decision Making** - Who decides what kind of work you will do? What is the decision-making process? How are you organized (staff, Board, volunteers, leaders)? If you have a fiscal agent, please explain the relationship.

**3. Fit with Chinook** - How does your work fit with the mission and social change focus of the Chinook Fund? How is your work community-wide? How is it constituent-led? Describe your work's lasting effect.

**4. Root Causes and Action** - What is the specific problem this grant would help address? What is the underlying cause of this problem (racism, poverty, sexism, etc.)? How do you specifically plan to address this problem? Please attach your work plan for the next year.

**5. Community** - Describe the community that is affected by this issue. How are they involved in the organization? How will your work affect individuals in your community who are not currently involved in your organization? What other groups do you work with?

**6. Evaluation** - What will be different in your community as a result of your work? How will you know whether this has happened?

**Fundraising Strategies** - What are your current fundraising activities? How does your community support the organization? How will you fund future work?

# Before You Submit...

**This checklist has been prepared to help you ensure that your proposal is complete.**

**Incomplete proposals will not be considered.**

**EACH COPY MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**

- Grant Application Cover Sheet
- Proposal narrative
- One year work plan
- Copy of 501 ©(3) letter or state nonprofit certificate, if applicable
- Organization budget for the year in which the grant will be spent (please specify what Chinook Fund monies will be used for)
- Project budget, if applicable (specify exactly what Chinook Fund monies will be used for)
- List of committed and pending sources of funding (include and specify in-kind)
- Most recent full year's financial statements (income/expense and a balance sheet) audited or unaudited (no bank statements, transactions logs or 990 tax forms)
- Current year-to-date financial statements (unaudited)
- List of Board of Directors and key staff, or members of other decision-making body that matches your diversity chart (include a brief summary of past or current activities for each person)
- List of names, affiliations and phone numbers of three local references not connected with Chinook Fund (these should be representatives of other grassroots groups familiar with your organization, but who are not a part of your group.)
- Diversity chart
- Include four (4) complete copies of your proposal, including one that is not stapled or bound and does not contain any 2-sided sheets.

**You may submit no more than one application per cycle, and cannot receive funding in two consecutive grant cycles.**

**Application must be postmarked by the deadline, but do not have to be rush-mailed.**

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Return Service Requested  
[www.chinookfund.org](http://www.chinookfund.org)

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