



Capacity Building is whatever is needed to bring a nonprofit to the next level of operational, programmatic, financial, or organizational maturity, so it may more effectively and efficiently advance its mission into the future. Capacity building is not a one-time effort to improve short-term effectiveness, but a continuous improvement strategy toward the creation of a sustainable and effective organization.

From [National Council of Nonprofits](#)

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Nonprofit Capacity Building

Letters of Intent
due June 11, 2019

About the John Rex Endowment

The John Rex Endowment supports an environment where children and families in greater Wake County live healthy lives. Our work is guided by the [Strategic Roadmap](#) and our desired impact to ensure children and their families are safe, healthy, and living to their full potential.

QUESTIONS?

John Rex Endowment

[Commonly Asked Questions](#)

or

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Key Dates in Application Process

June 11, 2019 at 11:59 PM EST	Letters of Intent (LOIs) due
Week of June 24, 2019	John Rex Endowment notifies LOI applicants and invites full applications for consideration
August 13, 2019 at 11:59 PM EST	Applications due
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No later than October 15, 2019	Applicants notified of funding decision
January 1, 2020	Grant start date

Overview and Background

In 2017, the John Rex Endowment commissioned the North Carolina Institute for Public Health ([NCIPH](#)) to conduct an [Assessment](#) and create an online [Story Map](#) to describe how social, economic and environmental conditions in Wake County can affect children and their families' health and well-being. The research identified specific neighborhoods as "high opportunity for positive change for children." In this funding opportunity, we would like to invest in organizations that primarily serve the eastern part of Raleigh and/or the eastern part of Wake County.

Through our investments in Nonprofit Capacity Building, it is our intention to build the strength and sustainability of nonprofit organizations that support vulnerable Wake County children in living healthy lives.

Highlights of Nonprofit Capacity Building grants:

- Priority will be given to organizations that primarily serve the eastern part of Raleigh and/or the eastern part of Wake County and serving vulnerable children.
- Funding is available for an Organizational Assessment and/or Capacity Building.
- Funding amounts are up to \$60,000 or \$80,000 per grant, depending on grant type.
- Four (4), 2-year grants, will be awarded.
- Participation in a peer learning cohort is part of each grant award.

Eligibility for This Funding Opportunity

To be eligible for funding, your organization should:

- Serve Wake County. Priority consideration will be given to organizations that primarily serve the eastern part of Raleigh and/or the eastern part of Wake County—Knightdale, Zebulon, and/or Wendell OR is a regional organization (serving Wake as well as other NC counties) OR is a statewide organization that primarily serves children in the eastern part of Raleigh and/or the eastern part of Wake County. Branches or affiliates of an organization operating nationally are generally not eligible to apply unless they operate independently (i.e., own 501(c)(3), own Board of Directors, etc.).
- Be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization designated as a public charity. Government agencies, academic institutions, and coalitions are not eligible.
- Be in operation with its own 501(c)(3) for at least three years OR is an organization that has had a 501(c)(3) for less than three years but has been in operation for at least five years.
- Have an operating budget of less than \$5 million. Priority consideration will be given to organizations with an operating budget of less than \$1 million.
- Have a primary emphasis on, or play a significant role in, supporting vulnerable Wake County children birth to age 18 in living healthy lives. Organizations must have an explicit focus on children's health and well-being.

Funding Path Options

We offer two available grant options:

- 1) An **Organizational Assessment/Capacity Building Grant** supports 1) an assessment of the six organizational development areas, and 2) capacity building work to address the organizational assessment's prioritized recommendations.
- 2) A **Capacity Building Grant** supports capacity building work that addresses a particular issue in one or more of the six organizational development areas, as identified in a previously completed organizational assessment and/or through ongoing capacity building efforts.

In your Letter of Intent form you will be asked to describe any previous capacity building work as well as designate your desired grant option. The information you provide will help determine which grant type you are eligible for if invited to the full proposal stage.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT/CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT

A comprehensive organizational assessment is the process of determining an organization's current strengths and challenges in order to identify priority capacity building needs and recommended steps for improvement. The assessment should:

- Be conducted by an outside consultant who is skilled and experienced in implementing an effective organizational assessment process.
- Meaningfully involve board leadership and staff.
- Assess each of the six key organizational development areas to identify strengths and challenges/areas for improvement.
- Include a review of organizational documents (legal documents, financial statements, and other important management documents) in addition to gathering key stakeholder input.

If your organization has completed a recent organizational assessment that met the above listed points, you should apply for the Capacity Building grant option.

Organizational Assessment Final Deliverable

At the end of the assessment, the consultant should produce a written document (confidential to the organization and not shared with the John Rex Endowment) that describes the process completed, recommends areas for improvement, and defines focus for the Capacity Building phase:

SIX ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AREAS

- **Mission, Vision, and Strategy:** *Strengthening the core planning of an organization in line with its overall purpose.*
- **Governance and Leadership:** *Strengthening organizational governance and fostering leadership.*
- **Resource Development:** *Ensuring financial sustainability.*
- **Strategic Relationships:** *Improving the organization's relationship with external stakeholders.*
- **Internal Operations and Management:** *Contributing to a strong and sound core infrastructure.*
- **Program Delivery and Impact:** *Enhancing an organization's overall program impact.*

- Shorter-term and/or no or lower-cost improvements and activities—these include one-time activities that have a self-contained purpose or preparation or planning activities that must be done to prepare for more complex capacity building work.
- Longer-term and/or higher-cost improvements and activities—these include capacity building activities that are complex in nature and will require a significant investment of time and/or financial resources to undertake.
- All recommendations, within each of these sets, organized by priority and level of impact.

Organizations applying for an Organizational Assessment/Capacity Building grant will determine how much time within this two-year time frame to allocate to the organizational assessment, with the remainder of the time set aside for addressing identified capacity building priorities. In our experience, the organizational assessment takes about six months. Following the completion of the organizational assessment, grantees submit a proposed action plan for moving forward with capacity building efforts based on their priorities of what the assessment identified as next steps.

CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT

A Capacity Building grant solely focuses on capacity building activities over the full two-year period and is based on the priorities identified during a previously completed organizational assessment or from prior capacity building work.

Applicants may select the Capacity Building grant option if an organizational assessment has recently been completed that meets the John Rex Endowment expectations as described above. The capacity building grant should:

- Be a result of priorities identified through a completed organizational assessment and/or ongoing capacity building work.
- Focus on one or more of the six key organizational development areas.

If an assessment is completed within the past five years we will consider it to be a recent assessment for the purpose of this work. If, however, organizations whose assessments were done three or more years prior, but none of the identified priorities were initiated, please apply for an Organizational Assessment/Capacity Building grant to see if anything internally or externally has changed.

Working with Consultants

An outside consultant is required for the organizational assessment and should be identified when submitting a full proposal in order to develop the assessment process within the proposal. For capacity building activities, depending on identified priorities, the grantee may continue with the same consultant used for the organizational assessment (if applicable), may engage another consultant/s, or may determine that a consultant is not necessary.

The John Rex Endowment does not endorse or recommend consultants or consultant firms. However, should you need assistance in identifying a consultant to work with your organization, please contact Gladys Hairston (gladys@rexendowment.org) who can help direct you to past grantees who may serve as references. In addition, we have created a guide that details our perspective on working with consultants as well as resources that can assist organizations in managing the process of engaging and working with consultants. Click [here](#) to access our “Working with Consultants” guide.

A consultant that is providing expertise in nonprofit capacity building through John Rex Endowment funding should meet these criteria:

- A minimum of three years’ nonprofit experience (as staff, board director, volunteer, or consultant).
- A minimum of two years’ recent experience in a nonprofit consulting role.
- Demonstrated effectiveness in working in a consulting role with nonprofit clients.
- Demonstrated skill in relevant area(s) of practice including ability to integrate an equity lens into practice.
- Compliance with State of NC regulations and licensure requirements as applicable (e.g., fundraising counsel or professional solicitor licensing).

Organizational Assessment Consultant Guidelines

As noted above, an outside consultant is required for carrying out the organizational assessment. If invited to submit a full grant proposal, you will submit a description of your proposed organizational assessment process that will be completed by you in partnership with the consultant you have selected. Some consultants may have a standard description of the organizational assessment process they typically conduct. However, working through a set of guided questions together gives your consultant and you an opportunity to tailor the organizational assessment process to best fit your organization.

Capacity Building Consultant Guidelines

An outside consultant is not required for carrying out capacity building activities that follow the organizational assessment. Each organization’s decision to engage a consultant depends on the grantee’s assessment of:

- The nature of the capacity building work;
- Whether or not staff have required expertise and time available for the work; and
- What, if any, benefit a neutral outside perspective might provide.

If consultant support is desired, the grantee may continue working with the organizational assessment consultant or may engage another consultant/s.

Peer Learning Cohort and Grant Reporting

PEER LEARNING COHORT

All Nonprofit Capacity Building grantees will participate in quarterly group learning opportunities. Through these sessions, it is our hope that grantees will build relationships with their fellow grantees that can provide continuing support for organizational development. It is a time to share experiences, learnings, challenges, resources and to “try on” what has been discussed in the sessions. Working with a team of two facilitators, as well as four grantee organizations from last year’s Nonprofit Capacity Building cycle, participants will actively shape the focus of each session as well as determine the best timing/duration for each quarterly session.

GRANT REPORTING

- For Organizational Assessment/Capacity Building grantees: Share your grant progress with an interim reporting and proposed action plan at the completion of the Organizational Assessment phase and a final report at the end of the grant term.
- For Capacity Building grantees: Submit interim reporting near the end of the first year and final reporting at the end of the grant term.
- Participate in an interim meeting with John Rex Endowment program staff at the completion of the organizational assessment or near the end of the first year (for Capacity Building grant recipients), and a final meeting at the end of the grant. As needed, other meetings may be initiated by grantees or by the John Rex Endowment.
- Be available for post-grant updates to help the John Rex Endowment assess this work.

Grant Size and Term

Nonprofit Capacity Building grants cover 24 months, beginning January 1, 2020, and ending December 31, 2021.

Funding requests for an Organizational Assessment/Capacity Building grant can be up to \$60,000. Requests for a Capacity Building grant can be up to \$80,000.

As part of our support for capacity building and as part of your overall funding request, applicants can opt for an annual membership to the [NC Center for Nonprofits](#) for both years of the grant. If you would like the John Rex Endowment to cover the cost of this option, your membership fee should be included within each year’s budget request.

Tips for Preparing Your Letter of Intent

Nonprofit capacity building work is important for organizational health. From our own experience and that of our grantees, we understand that to do this work well is challenging and that organizations will have competing priorities. We also know that the most successful capacity building efforts have come from organizations that have been able to carve out the time to thoughtfully, deeply, and routinely engage with their staff, board, and consultant, ensuring that all involved parties have a clear understanding of the value of the process.

When completing your Letter of Intent form, following are several points to consider.

- In the eligibility section of this RFP, we state our interest in working with organizations that primarily serve the eastern part of Raleigh and/or the eastern part of Wake County. Please describe how your organization is working in the stated geographic areas.
- If you are applying for the Organizational Assessment/Capacity Building grant, describe how your organizational assessment process will serve as a springboard to capacity building work. Remember, the recommended work may differ from what you expected to learn.
- If you are applying for the Capacity Building grant, please describe your project idea and show how the project is needed and the timing is right. Be sure to include supporting details from your organizational assessment and/or ongoing capacity building efforts.
- Given your geographic scope and programming, tell us about the number of vulnerable children you serve.
- Describe how your organization supports the health and well-being of the vulnerable children it serves. This may be described using the organization's vision, mission, goals or in specific program/service descriptions. For organizations that do not solely focus on vulnerable children, please show how services are developed to meet the needs of, and reduce barriers to, vulnerable children/families to provide equitable access to your programs and services.

The John Rex Endowment defines **VULNERABLE** children as children for whom there are disparities in health and well-being because of race/ethnicity, low-income status, disability, or other factors.

Application Process and Key Dates

Our grant review and award process:

- The first stage of the application process is to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) form using our online system. If you are not already registered in our online system, it may be helpful to complete the registration process early and familiarize yourself with the new system. See our [guidelines and tips](#) for using the system.
- LOIs are reviewed by the John Rex Endowment staff. Applicants will either be invited to submit a full application or their LOI will be denied for this application period. Applicants are typically notified of the review decision and given feedback regarding the review process within 10 business days of the LOI deadline.
- If invited to submit a full proposal:
 - The John Rex Endowment's Health Improvement Committee will review submitted proposals. Applicants will be notified of the status of their proposal following the committee's review in September 2019.
 - The committee presents proposals recommended for funding to the John Rex Endowment Board of Directors for award consideration. Applicants will be notified of status following the board meeting in October 2019.
- Awarded grants will begin January 1, 2020.

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