

Mozilla Foundation Grant Eligibility Guidelines

Mozilla Foundation believes a better tech future is possible — and we put our resources behind the people building it. We fund technologists and changemakers creating real alternatives: tools that are open, transparent, and built to serve people and communities, not just profit from them.

As a US-based 501(c)(3) public charity, every project we fund has to serve a clear charitable purpose and deliver something back to the public, not just to the people building it.

We generally fund a wide range of applicants and projects, from individuals to nonprofits to companies, based around the world. This guide walks through who can apply, what makes a project charitable, and what disqualifies an applicant — so you can check your fit before you start.

Some programs carry additional requirements specific to that funding opportunity; those will be spelled out in the call for proposals.

Who can apply

We generally fund three types of grant applicants:

- **Nonprofit organizations.**
 - A US-based 501(c)(3)
 - A nonprofit outside the US with an [equivalency determination certificate](#)
 - Accredited academic institutions
- **Individuals.** Anyone carrying out a charitable project aligned with our mission.
- **For-profit companies and other organizations.** For-profit companies and corporations, foreign nonprofits without equivalent status, and informal groups carrying out a charitable project aligned with our mission.

Individuals and for-profit companies/other organizations aren't automatically considered eligible — to qualify, you'll need to **demonstrate that your specific project serves a recognized charitable purpose** (see “what makes a project charitable”).

What makes a project charitable

A project earns charitable status on two counts: what it does, and who it's for.



What it does

Public good takes many forms. We fund projects that:

- Educate the public
- Advance scientific research
- Protect human rights secured by law
- Protect the environment
- Combat prejudice and discrimination
- Promote the arts
- Provide direct relief to underserved communities

Who it's for

The benefit has to flow outward, to the public — not back to the applicant's bottom line, its shareholders, or owners. Touching on a good cause, or using open source licenses, isn't enough on its own if the underlying purpose is commercial. If your project doesn't fall under an inherently charitable organization type (see “who can apply”), your application materials should clearly lay out the charitable purpose behind the work.

What every applicant needs

Regardless of applicant type, you'll need to meet all of the following:

- You can legally receive funds from a US-based organization (by check, ACH, or wire transfer) and legally enter into a grant agreement with Mozilla Foundation.
- Your bank account can accept payments in USD. If you'd like funds sent in another currency, you're responsible for any exchange rate or bank fees.
- You meet any additional requirements specific to the program you're applying to.

Restrictions for for-profit entities

We can fund for-profit companies doing genuinely charitable work — but we cannot fund work whose primary purpose is commercial gain, profit maximization, or generating shareholder value.



Grants to for-profit entities also carry strict spending limitations. For example, grant funds may not be used to purchase valuable capital equipment over certain amounts, such as computers, servers, GPUs, or provide unrestricted general operating support.

What we cannot fund

Beyond the eligibility requirements above, there are some things Mozilla Foundation cannot fund, by law or by policy:

Sanctioned countries, entities, and individuals

We cannot fund applicants located in a country on the [OFAC sanctions list](#), more than 50% owned by an entity in a sanctioned country, or named on a sanctions list themselves.

Certain activities

As a 501(c)(3) public charity, we cannot fund:

- Political campaign activity — supporting or opposing candidates for public office. We also do not fund lobbying or efforts to influence specific legislation.
- Terrorism, violence, or any illegal activity
- Work whose primary purpose is commercial gain, profit maximization, or generating shareholder value (see restrictions for for-profit entities above)

Conflicts of interest

We cannot fund applicants with a conflict of interest involving Mozilla staff. This includes:

- An individual applicant with an immediate family member who is a current Mozilla employee, contractor, or in a similar relationship with Mozilla
 - An applying organization with someone in its leadership or among its shareholders who is a current Mozilla employee, contractor, or in a similar relationship with Mozilla
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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: We're a nonprofit organization outside of the U.S. - registered as an NGO / society / trust / charitable entity with our government - but we don't have an equivalency determination certificate from NGOsource. Isn't that the same thing?

A: No, those are not the same thing. Local registration and an equivalency determination (ED) are two different things. Your local registration is how your own government recognizes you as a nonprofit. An ED is a separate, U.S.-specific check confirming your organization meets the same standards as a U.S. nonprofit entity under IRS rules. We typically use NGOsource to provide that certification.

The good news is that you're still eligible to receive an award from Mozilla Foundation, as your project serves a recognizable charitable purpose and meets our other eligibility guidelines. You are not required to obtain an ED prior to applying. We may also be able to help you get an ED through NGOsource if you are selected for funding.