



Bush Prize: South Dakota Application Questions and FAQs 2026

This document covers the topics listed below. To apply or find additional information, please visit <https://www.sdcommunityfoundation.org/grants/bush-prize-south-dakota>

Overview of Bush Prize: South Dakota	2
Eligibility	2
Selection Criteria	2
How to Apply	3
Selection Process and Timeline	6
Frequently Asked Questions	6

Overview of the Bush Prize: South Dakota

The Bush Prize: South Dakota celebrates organizations that are highly valued within their communities and have track record of transformational impact through creative solutions.

The Bush Prize: South Dakota program **identifies** and **honors** *extraordinary* organizations that *consistently* engage and lead their community toward creative solutions, **equips/provides** them with flexible support to keep doing that work, and **supports** them to amplify their story to inspire others.

Bush Prize: South Dakota grants are flexible and can be used to build up reserves or test an organization's next big idea or whatever else would best support an organization's ongoing good work. Two organizations will each receive a grant of \$250,000, the remaining finalists will each receive a grant of \$10,000.

The Bush Prize: South Dakota is done in partnership with the South Dakota Community Foundation (SDCF) and the Bush Foundation. SDCF will select and announce the Bush Prize: South Dakota honorees, as well as provide any support along the way.

Eligibility

- Bush Prize awards must be used for a charitable purpose.
- Organizations that are 501(c)(3) public charities or government entities (including schools) are eligible for the Bush Prize.
- SDCF will accept Bush Prize applications from fiscal sponsors. The fiscal sponsor organization must submit the award application and, if the award is approved, becomes the awardee and receives the funds.
- Bush Prize honorees must be located in South Dakota or one of the [9 Native nations](#) that share the same geography. The specific community solutions highlighted in the Bush Prize application must also have occurred within that geography.
- Organizations that have received a Bush Prize in the last 10 years are not eligible to apply.
 - The year of the award is counted as the first year.

Selection Criteria

- **Transformational Impact** – Bush Prize: South Dakota honors organizations which have created meaningful, long-lasting change to address the challenges and issues affecting their community. Transformational Impact can happen through ideas of all sizes, within communities of all sizes, and through organizations of all sizes.
 - Are these creative solutions that address community needs more effective, equitable, or sustainable than existing approaches?
 - Did these creative solutions make a significant difference?
 - Could the organization inspire and inform others?
 - Could the organization serve as a model for others for future success?

- **History of Creative Solutions** – Bush Prize: South Dakota honors organizations which have a history at least three to five years of using innovative approaches that offer real solutions for the challenges and issues affecting their communities.
 - Does the organization have a history of creating innovative solutions to the needs within their community?
 - Can the organization identify specific examples of processes, programs or projects that use created approaches, technologies, collaborations, and methods to drive sustainable change and solve problems more effectively?

- **Creative Community Problem Solving** – Bush Prize: South Dakota honors organizations which have proven to have strong leadership and a culture of innovation. Bush Prize: South Dakota Finalists will be proven to be deeply rooted in their communities and value driven.
 - What values exist that enhance organizational culture and strengthen partnerships?
 - How does leadership encourage and exemplify creative thinking and problem solving?
 - How does the organization demonstrate their focus on solutions for lasting community change?
 - In what way does the organization demonstrate a strong track record of financial stability?

Additional Considerations – Over time we seek a portfolio of honorees representing the full diversity of South Dakota, and includes a variety of:

- Organization sizes
- Communities served (size and demographics)
- Types of ideas identified

How to Apply

To Apply:

<https://goapply2.akoyago.com/SDCFgrants>

Open April 1, 2026

Close April 30, 2026

The deadline to apply to Bush Prize: South Dakota is **April 30, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. CST or 11:00a.m. MST.** SDCF’s online grant portal, GOapply, will not be able to accept any proposals submitted after the deadline.

Please refer to our User Guide for guidance on our grant portal, GOapply.

Application questions for the Bush Prize: South Dakota are provided below as a reference.

Application Questions

Applicant Organization

All the information provided in this section should be for a single Applicant Organization. If working with a Fiscal Sponsor, the Fiscal Sponsor is the Applicant Organization.

Organization/Contact Information

- Applicant Organization name, organization legal name (*if different*), address, city, state, zip, phone, website, Employer Identification Number
- Application Primary Contact Information first name, last name, title, phone, email, address, city, state, zip

Organization Questions

- Is your organization certified by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) public charity? (Y/N)
- Is your organization a public agency/unit of government or Indian tribal government under Section 7871 of the Internal Revenue Code? (Y/N)
- What are your most recent fiscal year total expenses? (select one from the list below)
The most recent fiscal year total expenses should reflect the applicant organization. For example, if the applicant organization is a university, select the total expenses of the university (not a department or program within the university). Also, if you are applying using a fiscal sponsorship arrangement, you should select the total expenses of the fiscal sponsor (not the sponsored project).
 - Up to \$49,999
 - \$50,000 - \$99,999
 - \$100,000 - \$249,999
 - \$250,000 - \$499,999
 - \$500,000 - \$999,999
 - \$1M - \$4,999,999
 - \$5M +
- What issue area does your organization address?
 - Arts, Culture and Humanities
 - Education
 - Economic Development
 - Health
 - Human Services
 - Other
- What best describes the community served by your organization? (Select one.)
 - Rural
 - Town or City – population under 50,000
 - Town or City – population over 50,000
 - Combination: Rural/Town/City

Fiscal Sponsored Project (if applicable)

If you are applying using a fiscal sponsor arrangement, this section applies to you. The information below should be about the organization that is being sponsored, not the applicant. In addition, a signed fiscal sponsorship agreement is required for all applicants using a fiscal sponsorship arrangement. Please upload your signed agreement at the bottom of this page.

If you are not applying using a fiscal sponsorship arrangement, there is no need to complete this section. Most organizations do not use a fiscal sponsorship arrangement. Click "Save & Next" at the bottom of the page to go to the next section.

Narrative Questions

1. Provide a brief introduction to:
 - Your organization, its history, and its mission.
 - If you're applying as a fiscal sponsor, please briefly describe both your organization and the group you're sponsoring.
 - Your community. What do we need to understand about your community or context to better understand the work highlighted in your proposal?
(4,500 characters or less (approximately 750 words))

2. Describe your organization's consistent engagement in creative solutions that have made transformational impact. Include at least two examples of times when you have achieved a community innovation. (A breakthrough in addressing a community need that is more effective, equitable, and sustainable compared to previous approaches). Include outcome data or other evidence of the impact of your breakthroughs.
(Maximum of 4,500 characters. Approximately 750 words.)

3. When you identify a community problem, how do you typically pursue a creative solution to the problem? Describe specific examples of your approach.
(Maximum of 4,500 characters. Approximately 750 words.)

4. What sets your organization apart in your field? How is your approach different from the status quo? How are you trying to inform and inspire others with your work?
(Maximum of 4,500 characters. Approximately 750 words.)

5. How does your organization consistently collaborate, identify and engage key partners?
(Maximum of 4,500 characters. Approximately 750 words.)

6. How does your organization's leadership foster a culture of creativity? Provide examples of what this looks like in your organization on a day-to-day basis.
(Maximum of 4,500 characters. Approximately 750 words.)

7. The Bush Prize: South Dakota is for organizations that think bigger and think differently about how they address community problems. What is your big dream for the future of your organization and its work? What are you doing now to work towards that dream?
(Maximum of 4,500 characters. Approximately 750 words.)

Selection Process and Timeline

April 1, 2026	Applications Open
April 30, 2026	Applications Close: Noon CT/11:00am MT
May – July 2026	SDCF Staff Due Diligence and Initial Review
August 2026	Finalist Selection and Site Visits
September 2026	Notification of Honorees
October 2026	Bush Prize: South Dakota Honorees Announced

Due Diligence & Internal Review. An initial review of all applications and selection of finalists. SDCF will let applicants know in August if applicants will be moving forward as finalists.

Final Review. Conduct site visits and contact references of finalists in August.

A panel of community leaders will review and recommend Bush Prize: South Dakota honorees from the South Dakota applicant pool.

It is important to us that our processes are fair. If any of our selection committee members have a conflict of interest with an organization being considered for the Bush Prize: South Dakota, they will not be a part of any selection discussion or decisions for that year. SDCF defines “conflict of interest” as being a staff or board member of or having a contractual relationship with an organization.

SDCF will contact two organizations in September that have been chosen for Bush Prize: South Dakota 2026.

All selections are based on program eligibility requirements and criteria.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I submit my application?

SDCF uses an online portal, GOapply, for application submission. Please visit SDCF’s website at <https://www.sdcommunityfoundation.org/grants/bush-prize-south-dakota> to find the link to our online portal and User Guide.

What does SDCF consider as a “track record” for creative community problem solving?

SDCF is looking for organizations that can demonstrate their leadership in and in support of creative community problem solving for between three and five years.

How much funding comes with Bush Prize: South Dakota and what can the funding be used for?

SDCF awards two organizations \$250,000 each that can be used to build up reserves or test an organization's next big idea or whatever else would best support an organization's ongoing good work. Funds cannot be used to pay down debt. Funds must be used to support work in South Dakota only.

I have questions about my application, who would I talk to?

SDCF Grant Team are available to offer assistance with any questions you may have regarding your application. We are available by phone at 1-800-888-1824 or email:

Ginger Niemann, gniemann@sdcommunityfoundation.org

Stephanie Harmon, sharmon@sdcommunityfoundation.org

If my organization is not awarded a Bush Prize: South Dakota grant, will I get feedback about my application?

Yes, SDCF provides an opportunity for a feedback call to each applicant. Applicants will be provided information how to schedule feedback calls when notified they were not awarded a grant. Feedback calls will be scheduled after the October announcement of honorees.

How long must I wait to reapply if I have received the Bush Prize: South Dakota in the past?

10 years

Questions

Not finding an answer to your question? We're happy to help.

Ginger Niemann

Senior Program Officer

gniemann@sdcommunityfoundation.org

605-224-1025/1-800-888-1824

Stephanie Harmon

Grant Program Assistant

sharmon@sdcommunityfoundation.org

605-224-1025/1-800-888-1824