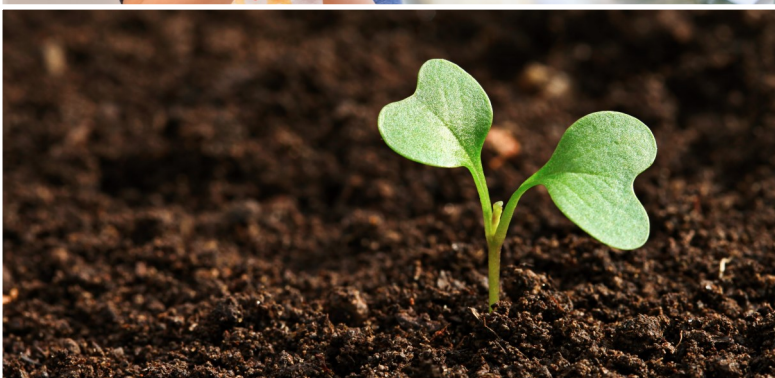




Center for Science in the Public Interest

2022 Grant Applicant Guide



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CENTER FOR
Science IN THE
Public Interest

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Introduction



Overview of our grantmaking

Since 1971, the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) has been America's food and health watchdog. CSPI envisions a healthy nation with a reduced impact and burden of chronic diseases and an equitable food system that makes healthy, sustainable food accessible to all.

Bloomberg Philanthropies has awarded CSPI a grant to lead a national advocacy initiative to secure federal, state, and local food and nutrition policies that improve public health and provide models that can be replicated and scaled. As a part of that initiative, CSPI aims to support communities as they explore innovative strategies to elicit systemic change at the local, state, and federal level through policy interventions that advance a just and equitable food environment.

CSPI's Grant Applicant Guide

The purpose of this document is to help guide those interested in CSPI's various funding opportunities through our grant application process. Topics include the types of focus areas and organizations CSPI supports and/or prioritizes, who is eligible for funding, and how to apply for open opportunities.

In an effort to develop an application process that is more transparent, we also provide additional information regarding our application review methods, as well as what we ask of our grantee partners throughout the grant cycle once funded.

Also included is an overview of technical assistance that CSPI offers, along with links to additional program area resources and toolkits.

CSPI's Guiding Principles for Grantmaking



We are Inclusive

We actively welcome and value grantees and partners with different experiences, backgrounds, attributes, abilities, and perspectives.

We are Committed to Advancing Racial and Health Equity

We understand that systemic issues have a historical context that is racially rooted and can only be mitigated by interventions that take an intersectional lens. We are dedicated to identifying and supporting grant proposals that center racial equity in their conceptualization, design, and implementation to move towards a more fair and just food system for all.

We are Open

We are open to new approaches and ideas that are shared with us from diverse stakeholders and partners throughout the grant cycle. We understand that we do not have expertise in all areas, and we show deference to those with identities and lived experiences different than our own.

We are Accountable

We acknowledge and assume responsibility for our actions. We seek to be held accountable by our partners and the communities they serve, and we value and encourage open and honest feedback. We aspire to be good stewards of the funding we have by following best practices in equitable grantmaking. We will continually examine our processes through regular evaluations, and we are committed to learning, reflection, and change.

We are Respectful

We communicate and foster relationships in a generous, considerate, and compassionate way. We are not patronizing or harmful in our interactions with our partners. We are mindful of power dynamics and aspire to not be paternalistic.

We are Collaborative

We work together for the common good and shared success. We are committed to being active partners by sharing resources, training, and technical assistance. We strive to build long-term relationships and collaborations with partners that support their growth and success.

We are Transparent

We are transparent in what we are funding and in how we make funding decisions. We are communicative and clear throughout our grantmaking process.

Who can apply?



Eligibility requirements

To apply for grants offered by CSPI, organizations must be located in the United States or U.S. Territory, **AND**

- Be a nonprofit with a 501(c)(3) public charity or other tax-exempt designation from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), **OR**
- Be fiscally sponsored by a nonprofit as described above

If you are an emerging, grassroots, and/or community-based organization that does not yet have tax-exempt status or a fiscal sponsor, please reach out to us as we may have future grant opportunities available to you, or there may be other ways that you can partner with us.

Organizations we are looking to fund

We recognize the power and social sustainability of community-led strategies to identify and implement solutions to food system issues that disproportionately threaten health outcomes of communities of color.

In our commitment to responsible stewardship of grant funds and to effectively address health inequities, we are specifically looking to fund applications that:

- Are from diverse organizations who are either representative of the population for which a project is focused, or are directly partnering with individuals and/or community organizations representing the population.
- Are from organizations in communities experiencing health disparities.
- Include community or field organizing and engagement.
- Incorporate a strong focus on health equity in all aspects of the project.
- Demonstrate a collaborative and innovative approach.

Our current funding priorities



A focus on advocacy

CSPI grants prioritize supporting advocacy at local and regional scales to promote healthier food environments and an overall shift to a more equitable food system. Key policy areas we focus on include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Healthy Food Purchasing and Food Service Policies for Public Facilities, Healthy Retail, Healthy Kids' Meals, School Foods, and Warning Labels. In addition, we are committed to bringing in new voices and building the organizing capacity of community-based organizations to advocate for an equitable food environment

Focusing on different advocacy approaches and aspects of the food environment, current grant opportunities fall into several major categories and are explained in greater detail below:

State & Local Policy Grants

We have grant opportunities available for organizations currently working on or interested in pursuing policy campaigns focused on specific policy priorities for CSPI. Applications should be specific to one of our identified policy areas and focused on one state, locality, U.S. territory, or tribal geographic location.

Community Prioritized Policy Innovation Grants

Our goal in deploying community prioritized policy innovation grants is to spur innovation at the local and state level by funding community prioritized policy and advocacy work within some of CSPI's existing broad issue areas. Work under these grants must center authentic community engagement in conceptualizing, designing, and implementing the policy campaign. We are open to funding campaigns that are in different stages of development – for existing campaigns, applications should describe the community engagement process that has taken place to date. We are specifically interested in partnering with organizations that are led by and mission-oriented to improving conditions that affect the quality of life for Black, Indigenous, and other people of color.

Federal Lobbying Grants

In addition to state and local policy work, CSPI is also focused in parallel on advocacy at the federal level on important legislation. For instance, Congress is currently undergoing renewal of the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act and there are timely needs for advocates to partner with us to protect and promote strong nutrition standards and increase access to healthy school meals. In addition, building a coalition of advocates for the next Farm Bill to support improving public health through SNAP is another priority for CSPI. To support our work, we are looking to partner with state and local organizations in key geographies to join in these advocacy efforts, through direct and grassroots lobbying activities.

Power Building Grants

Through these grants, CSPI is dedicating funding to bring in new voices and build the organizing capacity of community-based organizations to advocate for an equitable food environment, prioritizing communities where health inequities are greatest. These grants will include a focus on community building to advance policy campaigns, food justice, and/or narrative change aimed at reframing issues related to food and nutrition from a system lens and variety of cultural perspectives.

What we are not currently funding...

CSPI's campaign funding is focused on supporting community engagement and advocacy to advance innovative policy solutions to improve the food environment. Given this focus, we are not currently able to fund:

- Direct service provision or pilot projects
- Capital projects
- General operating grants

How can my organization apply?



Requests for proposals (RFPs) | Grant cycle timelines

The [Grant Opportunities](#) section of CSPI's website hosts all information regarding current and future opportunities to apply for grant funding.

Detailed RFPs can be found under the ["What we are funding"](#) section by expanding a grant category and clicking on "Learn more" next to each opportunity. The ["How to Apply"](#) page also provides links to the online application portal, a summary of timelines, and additional resources for applicants.

Overview of application process

Step 1: Register organizational account and user profile in CSPI's online Grant Management System (GMS)

Step 2: Submit Letter of Interest (if applicable)

Some of our grant opportunities require an initial step of submitting a Letter of Interest (LOI) form, in order to determine if the project is a potentially good fit for funding before requesting a full application and budget. If CSPI is interested in learning more, the applicant will be invited to complete and submit a full application.

Grant opportunities utilizing an LOI stage include:

- State & Local Policy Grants, and
- Community Prioritized Policy Grants

Federal Lobbying Grant and Power Building Grant applicants do not need to submit an LOI, and therefore have a simplified, one-stage application process.

Step 3: Complete full application

Applicants with approved LOIs will be invited via email to submit a full application, providing additional details about their project. Note that answers provided in the LOI will automatically transfer to the full application.

For grant opportunities not requiring an LOI, applicants may submit a full application upon account registration. CSPI will check the submission for completeness and communicate any needs for additional information directly with applicant, if necessary.

Online Grant Management System (GMS) | Application portal

All applications, including initial Letter of Interest (LOI) forms, should be submitted through CSPI's online GMS. Further instructions and tutorials for navigating the GMS application portal can be found in the following section.

If you have specific accessibility concerns, please contact us at grants@cspinet.org and we will do our best to accommodate. We are also available to answer any other questions you may have about our application process and are happy to provide technical assistance where feasible.

Navigating CSPI's application portal | Foundant



Foundant is CSPI's grant management system and is the portal through which applicants will submit their materials. Links to the Foundant application portal are also available on the ["How to Apply"](#) page under the [Grant Opportunities](#) section of CSPI's website, and also directly linked [here](#).

The following sections provide an overview and basic instructions for key application portal features. However, more comprehensive materials can be found under "Tutorials and resources" on page 11.

Previewing open grant opportunities

Once landing on the application portal, currently open grant opportunities will be visible. Applicants can also preview the first form in the application process (i.e., LOI or full application, whichever is applicable).

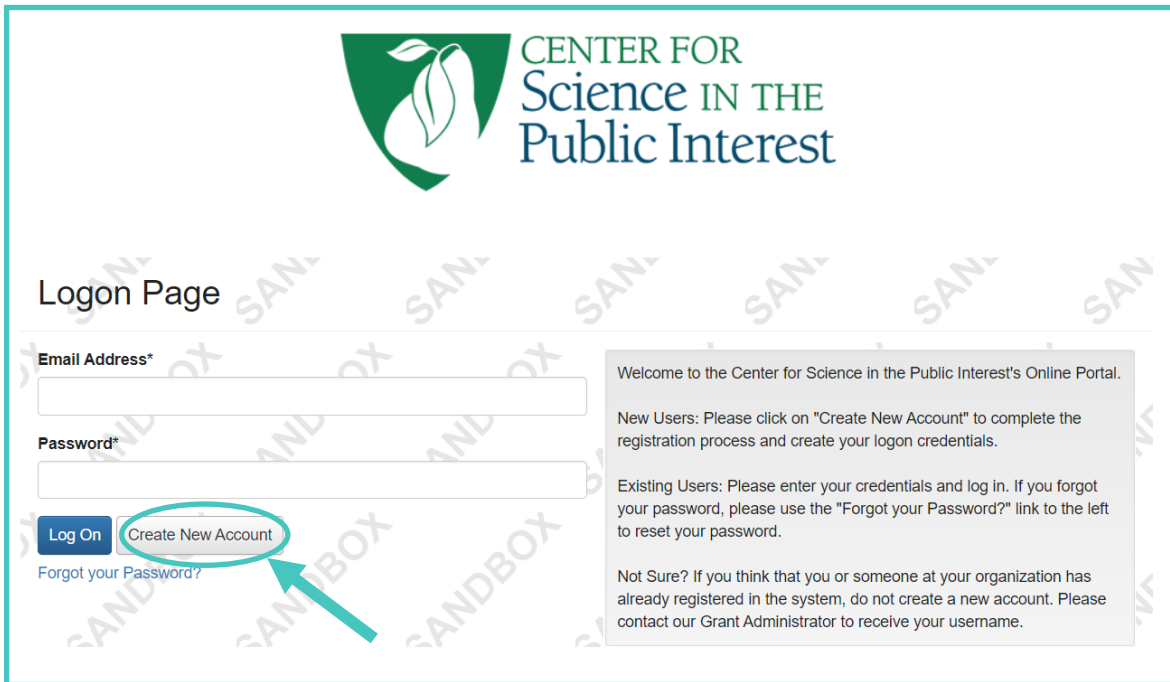
The screenshot shows the Foundant application portal interface. At the top right is a button labeled "Log On / Create an Account to Apply". Below this is a "Select Language" dropdown menu. The main content area displays a grant opportunity titled "Federal Lobbying Grants: Healthy School Meals" with a status of "Accepting Submissions starting 01/14/2022". The text describes the grant's purpose: "CSPI is seeking applicants to advocate for key provisions in CNR and similar legislation as needed, such as the Build Back Better Act (BBBA), and annual appropriations that support school meal priorities. Grants will also support regulatory advocacy with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on school meals. The USDA has announced plans to update the school meal nutrition standards consistent with the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans by the end of 2022." It also states: "Applications can be submitted for up to \$30,000 for a duration of up to 12 months and can support non-lobbying and lobbying activities." Below this text are links for "More opportunity details", "View in English", and "View in Spanish". At the bottom of the grant card, there are two buttons: "Preview" (circled in red with an arrow pointing to it) and "Send to GrantHub".

Once ready to begin applying, applicants can click the button in the upper right corner to register their organization and complete their user profile.

This screenshot is similar to the previous one, showing the same grant opportunity page. However, the "Log On / Create an Account to Apply" button in the upper right corner is circled in red, and a red arrow points to it, indicating where users should click to register or log in.

Registration

Upon landing on the portal log-in page, click "Create New Account."



CENTER FOR Science IN THE Public Interest

Logon Page

Email Address*

Password*

Log On Create New Account

Forgot your Password?

Welcome to the Center for Science in the Public Interest's Online Portal.

New Users: Please click on "Create New Account" to complete the registration process and create your logon credentials.

Existing Users: Please enter your credentials and log in. If you forgot your password, please use the "Forgot your Password?" link to the left to reset your password.

Not Sure? If you think that you or someone at your organization has already registered in the system, do not create a new account. Please contact our Grant Administrator to receive your username.

The following information will be requested when completing organization and user registration in Foundant (required fields being marked with an asterisk):

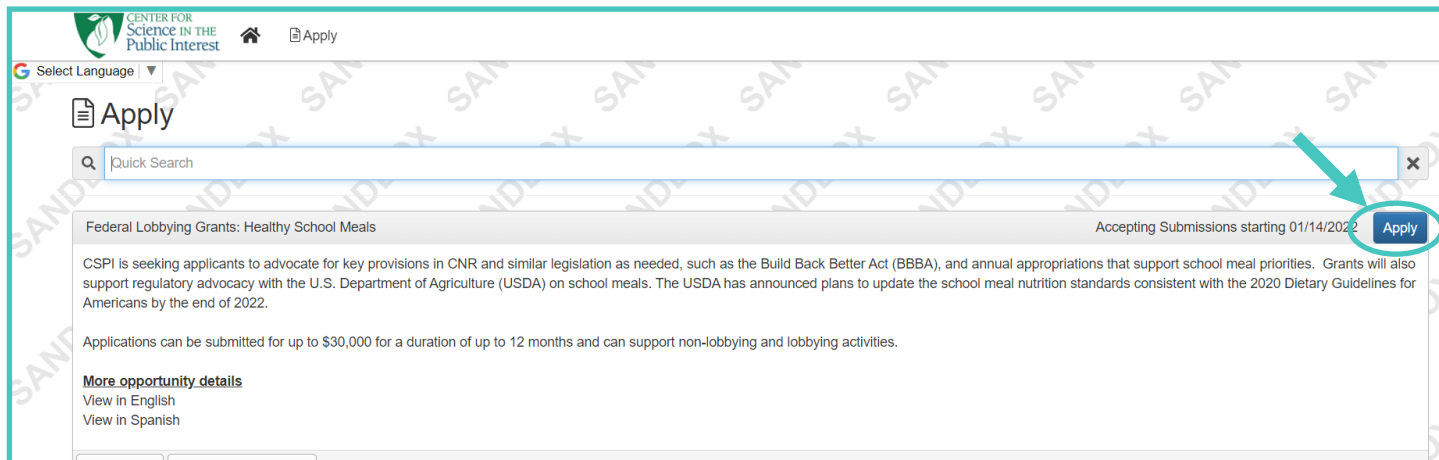
Organization Information	User Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Organization website*Telephone Number*Address*City*County*State*Postal Code*EIN/Tax ID	<ul style="list-style-type: none">First Name*Last Name*PronounsTitle*Email / Username*Email / Username Confirmation*Telephone Number

The user registering in this step will be the recipient of all email communications generated by Foundant. The system will also ask the user to confirm their email before moving forward with applications. For purposes of having other organization staff gain access to/assist with applications, additional users may be added later using the **Collaborate** function (link to instructions provided under "Tutorials and resources" on page 11).

Applying for an open grant opportunity

After completing registration and email confirmation, applicants will land on the CSPI's grant apply page. Currently open funding opportunities will be available here, with brief descriptions for each featuring key RFP highlights and any additional application instructions.

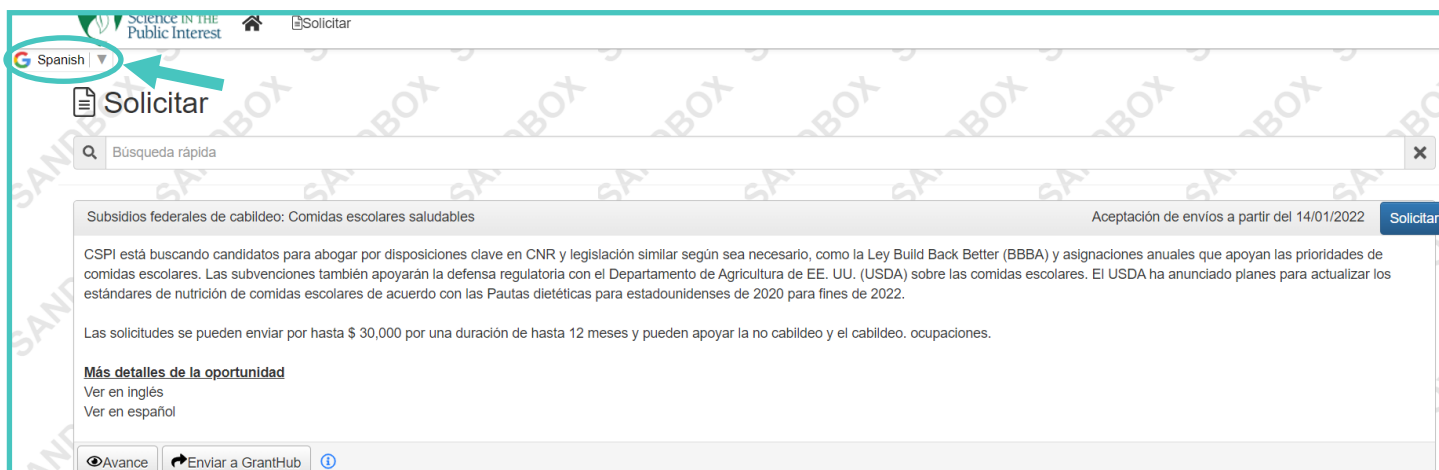
To begin filling out the first form in the process (i.e., LOI or full application as applicable), applicants can click on the "Apply" button next to the grant opportunity of interest.



Once the form is open, applicants can begin responding to questions. As with registration, any questions marked with an asterisk are required.

Language translation

All pages in the application portal, including LOI and application forms, can be translating into many different languages using the [Google Translate](#) feature found in the upper left corner of the screen.



Copies of LOI and application forms are also available for download in Spanish from the ["How to Apply"](#) page of CSPI's website.

Tutorials and resources

Foundant provides several applicant-facing tutorials on their website. All of the material below can be used to help guide applicants through the registration and application process and develop understanding of personal dashboards to manage awarded grants.

Please note that these written and video tutorials are generic, so there will be some variation in content, but nevertheless are useful in providing an overview of the Foundant portal framework.

Guiding applicants through the process

- [General tutorial webpage](#)
- [Written tutorial](#)
- [Video Tutorial 1: Site Access & Account Creation](#)
- [Video Tutorial 2: Applying for Funding](#)
- [Video Tutorial 3: Your Applicant Dashboard](#)

Using the collaboration feature

A feature that allows multiple people from your organization to work on and edit the same application:

- [General collaborator feature webpage](#)
- [Collaborator written tutorial](#)
- [Collaborator video tutorial](#)
- [Adding new users to your organization](#)



Our evaluation process

How we evaluate and prioritize applications



Submitted LOI and application forms will first be checked by our grants team for completeness. We will reach out to applicants via email from the Foundant portal if any additions or changes are needed to an application in order to complete our review process. We will also follow-up regarding any potential conflicts of interest due to funding your organization may have from the food, beverage or tobacco industries (specific details on this can be found in the application forms).

Generally, applications will be evaluated using several criteria:

- Your application should demonstrate a clear understanding of the problem that your project is seeking to address, including the systemic issue(s) that have created the conditions that call for this campaign or project. This should link to a compelling policy proposal which falls within CSPI's stated RFP priorities for each open opportunity. Your application should make a strong case for why your proposed policy is important in your geography as well as how your proposed plan is well positioned to be successful.
- Policy grant proposals should include a comprehensive plan to achieve your policy objectives, including a reasonable timeline. Plans should be inclusive of strategies for legislative engagement, grassroots community engagement and communications.
- We want to fund state, local, U.S. territory, or tribal area campaigns in geographies experiencing the greatest health disparities. We will evaluate this using data from a variety of sources on your project geography. This scoring will include analysis of health indicators, food environment indicators, and social and economic indicators. Evaluation of our federal lobbying grants will give priority to our indicated target states, which are based on places where we believe that advocacy efforts will have the greatest political impact on change at the federal level.
- Our goal is to prioritize organizations representative of the communities that will be impacted by potential policy changes. We are committed to partnering with organizations that center the voices and needs of Black, Latina/o/e, Indigenous, immigrant, and/or individuals with socially stratifying identities. This prioritization will be based on organizational demographic data and target populations identified in the application.
- Strong applications will have a well-developed community engagement plan. This includes having diverse project partners involved in your project, properly funding your community engagement activities/staffing, and the inclusion of people with lived experiences throughout the policy process in a meaningful way.

Please note that this list of criteria is intended to provide applicants with an overview of various components CSPI is looking at as part of our evaluation of applications. The specific criterium we are looking for varies by grant opportunity so please ensure you review the guidance for each specific application opportunity. Also, all narrative questions on the LOI and application are factored into our evaluation rubric based on the information requested in the instructions for each question so that should serve as a guide for the information we are looking for regarding your organization and proposed project.

Who reviews applications?

Applications will be reviewed and funding decisions will be made for each grant type by a cross-disciplinary team of CSPI staff. This will include members of the policy team for each grant opportunity as well as members of our Community Engagement & Capacity Building team, our Grants team, our Senior Health Equity Advisor, and our Advocacy Director.

Communication with CSPI

CSPI staff are available throughout the application process to answer questions and provide technical assistance to any interested applicants. We can be reached at grants@cspinet.org.

In addition, some applicants who are invited to complete full applications should expect to be contacted by CSPI for a 30-minute phone discussion/virtual meeting which will serve as an opportunity to discuss your project in more detail and answer any questions the CSPI team may have regarding your application. We hope that these discussions will help to reduce the amount of written back and forth to clarify application details or revise budgets before grant decisions are made. However, some written follow-up may be requested.

Final decisions

Once grant decisions are made, CSPI will work with successful applicants to finalize their project scope of work and budget and to complete the grant contracting and onboarding process. Organizations with applications that have been declined will be contacted directly by CSPI through the application portal.

Grantee reporting and touchpoints



The following section aims to give applicants a view into what it is like to work with CSPI and expectations of our grantee partners.

Reporting schedule

Generally, reporting schedules consist of quarterly reporting. Reporting periods and deadlines are designed to align with CSPI's reporting requirements from our funder. Given that not all grants start and end at the same time, an individual grant reporting schedule may vary from quarterly intervals.

Types of reports

We utilize two types of reporting to track progress on awarded grants. We have tried to keep the reporting templates simple, while ensuring we have a regular touchpoint to track progress on the grant as well as for grantees to provide feedback to CSPI. The two types of reports are described below:

Narrative report

This report allows grantees the opportunity to provide a brief update on progress during the current period, plans for the next reporting period, a budget narrative to go along with the financial report, and space to provide regular feedback to CSPI.

Financial report

This is a high-level report on grant spending which can be completed using a template provided by CSPI or another format if preferred by grantees.

Grantee touchpoints with CSPI

We plan to engage with grantees through a variety of meeting types over the course of the grant period. These may include meetings with CSPI staff, campaign convenings for grantees working on projects within the same grant opportunity, and annual meetings hosted by CSPI to bring together grantees across program areas, cultivate partnerships, and leverage successes.

Support from CSPI



CSPI technical assistance resources

CSPI places significant value in providing partner organizations with support and training to advocate for a healthier food environment in communities across the nation. CSPI offers a team of staff to provide support to work advancing in the food policy space.

Areas of technical assistance include:

- Communications
- Legal
- Advocacy
- Lobbying
- Science

Resource Hub

CSPI has expanded our advocacy initiatives to support the work of local and state partners pursuing crucial health policy passage across the country. Our [Resource Hub](#) is designed to build the skills, knowledge, and capacity of our grantees, emerging partners, and networks through coordinated webinars, trainings, and resources.

Contact us

Interested applicants are welcome and encouraged to reach out to us via email at grants@cspinet.org, with any general questions, requests for technical support, accessibility concerns, and/or further guidance as needed.

Frequently asked questions



What if my organization is not tax-exempt?

If you are an emerging, grassroots, and/or community-based organization that does not yet have tax-exempt status or a fiscal sponsor, please reach out to us as we may have future grant opportunities available to you, or there may be other ways that you can partner with us.

What will I need to submit an application?

All applications should be completed through our Online Grant Management System. However, for purposes of previewing and preparing application materials, Word versions of our Letter of Interest (LOI) and application forms in English or Spanish can be found in the “Application Templates” appendix to this guide.

We are interested in different grant opportunities from CSPI—is it possible to apply for more than one?

Although it is possible to apply for more than one grant opportunity, we recommend reaching out to us for guidance on which opportunity is most closely aligned with your group’s goals at this time.

If multiple applicants want to work together on a policy campaign, should they submit a combined application or separate?

We encourage groups to collaborate when structuring a policy campaign. Our preferred solution in this case would be for one organization identified as the lead to submit an application which includes subgrants to other partner organizations.

Can multiple staff work on an application at the same time?

Yes, the Collaboration Feature in the applicant portal can be used for this purpose. See “Tutorials and resources” on page 11 for links to instructions.

Are there deadlines to submit LOIs and/or applications?

Yes. Deadlines for submissions will be listed under each grant opportunity in the applicant portal as well as in the PDF document outlining each opportunity. Although we can accept proposals submitted after this date, we usually prioritize applications submitted before the deadline.

What is your indirect cost rate for grants?

In recognition of the disproportionate impact of gaps in operational funding for small-er non-profits, we have implemented a tiered Indirect Cost rate structure:

- 12% indirect costs for grantees with annual budgets over \$5 million
- 15% indirect costs for grantees with annual budgets \$1 million up to \$5 million
- 20% indirect costs for grantees with annual budgets under \$1 million

Do you fund lobbying activities?

Yes, most of our grant opportunities include funding for lobbying. Please see the 'Guidance on Lobbying' appendix to this guide for more details.

What is your timeline for making funding decisions?

We hope to complete our application review process for each stage within 4 weeks. So, after the deadline for LOIs or full applications, we will strive to be in touch with applicants regarding next steps within 4 weeks. We will try to minimize delays but recognize the timeline may take slightly longer than anticipated.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you have any questions about our grant opportunities or application process, please don't hesitate to email grants@cspinet.org.

Appendices



Application Templates

All applications should be completed through our Online Grant Management System. However, for purposes of previewing and preparing application materials, Word versions of our Letter of Interest (LOI) and application forms can be downloaded below in English or Spanish.

State & Local Policy Grants | Community Prioritized Policy Grants

- [LOI and Application Template - English](#)
- [LOI and Application Template - Spanish](#)
- [Budget Template](#)

Federal Lobbying Grants

- [Application Template - English](#)
- [Application Template - Spanish](#)
- [Budget Template](#)

Guidance on lobbying

CSPI has allocated funding for all our grants, except for the Power Building Grants, to be utilized for lobbying. We encourage grantees to apply to use a portion of their funding for lobbying activities to support their efforts, including both direct (communicating directly with legislators on specific legislation concerning your views on such legislation) and grassroots (communicating to the public on specific legislation concerning your views on legislation and asking them to take action) lobbying activities. Grant funds cannot be used to support or oppose candidates for elected office.

A rough estimate of funding available for our State & Local Policy and Community Prioritized Policy Grants is 30% of total funding, although we realize some grantees may require a larger portion of their budget for lobbying while other organizations will not undertake any lobbying activities. For our Federal Lobbying grants, grantees may apply for up to the full amount of grant funds to be used for lobbying activities.

Budgeting

For purposes of budgeting, activities should be considered lobbying as defined by the IRS code. We are happy to provide technical assistance regarding how to classify lobbying activities or determine the appropriate level and type of lobbying activities to propose in your application, however, please consult your legal counsel if you have specific questions about your own organizational limits on lobbying.

Our grant funds for non-lobbying and lobbying activities come from two separate entities, therefore it is essential that you create separate budgets in your application for non-lobbying and lobbying activities if you are applying for a State & Local Policy Grant or a Community Prioritized Policy Grant.

We have provided an application budget template with separate pages to allow organizations to budget for non-lobbying and lobbying activities.

When budgeting, please try to estimate the portion of funds that you will need to conduct all lobbying activities. To do this, it may help to estimate the number of anticipated direct lobbying meetings, public calls to action, etc. that you are expecting to undertake as a part of your campaign.

Once funded, you have flexibility to use funds from your 'lobbying' grant for non-lobbying activities but not the other way around. Any budget modification to provide more lobbying funds to a grantee is subject to availability of funds.