**EDUCATION M-PACT FUND – Cycle 4 (Rural Communities)**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document addresses FAQs shared through the original M-Pact Fund Open RFP in addition to responses to questions related specifically to the rural cycle. For additional information, please contact us at education@moodyf.org.

**PART I – CYCLE 4 FAQs (Rural Communities RFP)**

Before you begin, please review the general M-Pact Fund RFP information found [on our website](https://moodyf.org/mpact-application-process/), which will provide important context for the FAQs.

**ELIGIBILITY**

1. **What kinds of organizations are eligible to apply to Cycle 4?**

Cycle 4 applications are by invitation-only via a nomination process. Nominated organizations seeking to apply for a grant through Cycle 4 of The Moody Foundation’s Education M-Pact Fund must meet the following requirements:

* Must be a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization or a public entity (e.g., a municipality, college/university, or school/district).
* Primarily serve a rural community in Texas.
	+ **For the purposes of this fund, “rural” is defined as a community within the boundaries of rural school districts** [**as defined by TEA and/or NCES**](https://tea.texas.gov/reports-and-data/school-data/district-type-data-search/district-type-glossary-of-terms-2022-23#teadist)**.**
	+ A related map and district list by category [can be found here](https://tea.texas.gov/reports-and-data/school-data/district-type-data-search/district-type-2022-23).
* Funds may only be granted within and used for the benefit of Texas.
* Provide services directly related to The Moody Foundation’s strategic priorities of Early Learning and Postsecondary Success, as further detailed below.
* Commitment to complete all grantee requirements including annual grant reporting and participation in M-Pact grantee network activities during the term of the grant. Rural-based grantees will have the opportunity to receive support from a technical assistance provider for relevant activities.
* Ability to measure and report grant-related progress on one or more key metrics within the fund’s strategic priorities with the support of a foundation-designated evaluation partner.
1. **My organization is not rural-based but we are primarily rural-serving. Are we eligible?**

Yes. While rural-based entities will receive priority, organizations or initiatives that are primarily rural-serving (as defined above) may also apply, if nominated.

1. **Who is eligible to submit nominations for Cycle 4?**

Grantmaking foundations may nominate their own rural Texas grantees for consideration via a brief nomination form provided by the Moody Foundation.

1. **Who are the technical assistance providers and how are they selected?**

Applications to serve as a technical assistance provider (TAP) for Cycle 4 are by invitation only. The Moody Foundation will identify and select a suite of providers with demonstrated success serving rural communities in work aligned to the M-Pact Fund’s priorities. Priority areas include early childhood education, early literacy, college access and success, career readiness, and outcomes tracking / program evaluation.

1. **How will the technical assistance providers and nominees work together?**

Eligible nominees may choose a technical assistance provider (TAP) with whom to partner on a joint application/project through the following process:

* The Moody Foundation will select a pre-screened suite of TAPs aligned to the M-Pact Fund’s priorities, as outlined in question 3 above.
* Each TAP will prepare a brief summary of their relevant work and offerings for review by rural nominees. In addition to experience in their specific field (high quality preschool; early college high schools; etc.), TAPs may provide support in grant writing, strategic planning, and other aspects of the RFP process.
* After reviewing the TAP summary sheets, nominees will be invited to attend a series of webinars hosted by each TAP with which they are interested in partnering.
* Following any desired ad hoc meetings, nominees will select one TAP with whom to submit a joint application.
* Each nominee and their selected TAP will submit a joint planning grant application. Planning grantees will then work together to submit a join implementation grant application. Finally, implementation grantees will work together to implement their project beginning in the 2026-27 school year.

The Moody Foundation will also select an evaluator for the rural grantee cohort. The evaluator will work with applicants to ensure targeted outcomes are high quality and measurable by the applicants. They will also work with grantees to gather and report outcomes data to the Foundation at the end of each grant year.

1. **Are nominees required to work with a TAP?**

Working with a TAP is not required for eligibility. However, working in collaboration with a TAP is likely to lead to a stronger application that is better aligned to the goals of the M-Pact Fund’s rural cycle.

1. **Can nominees work with more than one TAP? Can a TAP work with more than one nominee?**

Applications should focus on a single, specific project. We therefore strongly advise nominees to select only one TAP as this will help ensure an appropriate project scope.

TAP’s may work with more than one nominee if they have the capacity to do so while maintaining the quality of their services.

1. **Who will receive and manage the funds – the rural nominee or the TAP?**

To maximize flexibility for applicants, this is up to the rural nominee. They may choose to be the primary applicant and receive awarded funds directly, then disperse them to the TAP as agreed through the project budget. Alternatively, the TAP may serve as the primary applicant and manage the grant funds, dispersing them to the nominee and/or making purchases on their behalf using grant funds.

1. **How do planning grants differ from implementation grants?**

Planning grants will be awarded to select nominees following the Moody Foundation’s 2025 trustee meeting. Planning grant funds are meant to be expended between December 2025 through Summer 2026 to support staff time, travel, and related expenses required for nominees and their selected TAP to plan their project and joint implementation grant application.

Implementation grants will be awarded to select planning grantees following the Foundation’s May 2026 trustee meeting. Implementation grants will be larger than planning grants and are intended to cover up to three years of project costs including TAP support expenses for the duration of the project.

1. **How much funding will be awarded and how many grantees are anticipated?**

The Moody Foundation anticipates selecting approximately 15 rural grantees across the state. Each grantee will be awarded between $500,000 to $2,000,000 over three years to implement their approved project. This is an estimate and may change. All grants are subject to the approval of the Moody Foundation’s trustees.

In addition to project funding, rural implementation grantees will be eligible for limited emergency grant funding on an as-needed basis. Emergency grants are intended to be one-time, limited donations to fill an urgent and unforeseen need that would otherwise detrimentally impact the grantee’s project or overall operations. A specific process and parameters for emergency grant requests will be shared with implementation grantees in 2026.

1. **Will rural grantees be required to participate in the general M-Pact Network convening, or will they be treated as a separate cohort?**

As of now, the Foundation intends to include rural grantees in all activities offered to and required of other M-Pact grantees including the annual convening. See below for additional information on travel and expenses for the convening, which are covered by the Foundation.

**PART II – GENERAL M-PACT FUND FAQs (All Cycles)**

1. **Can my organization submit more than one application?**

We ask organizations to submit only one application per cycle. If funding is declined, you may choose to resubmit your application for that project/initiative after one year if an eligible RFP is available. However, you may submit an application for funding of a separate project or initiative within the eligible next cycle, as long as it is substantially different from the declined request. Please feel free to contact us at education@moodyf.org if you are unsure if you are eligible to reapply and we would be happy to provide additional guidance.

1. **What is an example of a project that may be awarded an M-Pact Fund grant?**

The first cycles of the RFP are designed to be relatively broad, enabling the Foundation to identify and support impactful initiatives across the state. Future iterations may include a more narrowed focus within the Foundation’s strategic pillars. While a wide variety of grants will be considered, priority will be given to those focused on the implementation of projects or initiatives. Sample projects within each pillar are included below. This list is for illustrative purposes only and is by no means exhaustive.

Sample projects within Early Learning:

* Replication (in whole or in part) of [Moody Early Childhood Center](http://moodychildhoodcenter.org/en/)’s holistic, community-centered early childhood education model. Review their website for details; please direct all questions and requests for additional information to education@moodyf.org.
* Integration of high-quality early childhood education centers within public school districts.
* Grants addressing cross-sectional priorities (ex – increasing degrees and certifications for Texas-based early childhood educators).

Sample projects within Postsecondary Success:

* Success and completion coaching for first-generation college students.
* Innovative models to increase attainment of value-added degree programs (ex – three-year bachelor’s degree, early college high schools, universal access initiatives).
* Support for students with disabilities as they transition into postsecondary life.
1. **Do you fund research projects aligned with the strategic priorities/focus areas, or are you more interested in funding program implementation?**

Our priority is for the implementation of programs or projects. Limited funding may be available for research projects.

1. **Will you consider policy/advocacy projects?**

Policy/advocacy projects are not eligible for funding at this time.

1. **Are newly formed organizations eligible to apply?**

Yes, as long as all other eligibility criteria are met. Newly formed organizations must make a strong case for why their services are needed and avoid duplication of existing offerings in their community.

1. **Are nonprofits eligible for funding, or only schools / education institutions?**

Any organization that meets the eligibility criteria outlined on the webpage is eligible for funding, including nonprofits. We encourage eligible nonprofits to apply.

1. **Are nonprofit childcare centers eligible?**

Yes, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria outlined on the webpage. As a reminder, an education focus and reportable outcomes are required; therefore, centers focused solely on childcare are not eligible.

1. **Are private/independent schools eligible?**

Yes, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria outlined on the webpage.

1. **If you are a part of a collaboration(s) can you apply separately and through collaborations?**

With limited funding available, we will be aiming to diversify our grantee recipients. We recommend applying through only one pathway (either individually or as a collaboration).

1. **Our organization operates in multiple Texas cites. Can we apply as a state entity or should we focus on a single region?**

Applying at the state level would most likely strengthen your application. Refer to the Selection Process section of the webinar for more details.

1. **What if you are applying as a network of Texas affiliates for a national organization, all with separate 501c3s?**

If you are applying on behalf of multiple entities, you must designate a single entity as the application lead and detail other participants in the application form. The lead will be the main contact for the application and be responsible for activities related to grant contracts, reports, funding, etc.

1. **Are faith-based entities eligible?**

Yes, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria outlined on the webpage.

1. **Can a certificate from a local community college be considered as postsecondary education?**

Yes. For further requirements, please reference the specific criteria of the postsecondary success pillar as outlined on the website.

1. **If we are declined in one cycle, when can we re-apply for the following cycle?**

If funding is declined, you may choose to resubmit your application for that project/initiative after one year if an eligible RFP is available. However, you may submit an application for funding of a separate project or initiative within the next eligible cycle, as long as it is substantially different from the declined request.

1. **Can we apply to the M-Pact Fund and the Foundation’s general application process at the same time?**

No, we ask that only one request per organization be under review by the Foundation at any given time.

1. **Can the grant be used to cover more than one area or program within our organization?**

Yes, under limited circumstances when the programs are strongly related. Application reviews will be conducted based on the entirety of the request, with approvals or declines issued for the application as a whole rather than specific projects within it.

1. **If a multiyear grant is awarded, can the institution submit another project for consideration next year while the approved project is being paid out?**

With limited funding available, we will be aiming to diversify our grantee recipients. As of now, you are able to apply again, but the likelihood of funding will be reduced if you have an active grant from The Moody Foundation.

1. **Do you prefer existing projects or new/innovative initiatives?**

Both are eligible. We anticipate funding a mix of innovative and established initiatives.

1. **If we do not have audited financials, will we be disqualified?**

If you do not have an audit, there is an option to submit an explanatory letter. If you do have a completed audit(s), you must submit those with your application.

**STRATEGIC PILLARS AND FOCUS AREAS**

1. **My organization/project does not fit within the M-Pact Fund’s strategic pillars. Can I still apply?**

Applicants must align with the M-Pact Fund’s strategic pillars to be eligible for funding. Education initiatives outside of these strategic pillars may apply through the Foundation’s [general application process](https://moodyf.org/application-process/).

1. **My organization/project does not fit within the M-Pact Fund’s supporting focus areas. Can I still apply?**

Yes, the supporting focus areas are guidelines and not requirements. Organizations that do not fall within these focus areas may still apply if they meet all M-Pact Fund eligibility criteria, including alignment with the strategic pillars of Early Learning and Postsecondary Success.

1. **My organization/project does fit within the M-Pact Fund’s strategic pillars. Can I choose to apply through the Foundation’s general grants process instead?**

All applicants whose work aligns with the M-Pact Fund’s strategic pillars should apply through the open RFP as we believe that process will allow us to best serve and support the work of our grantees. However, if you would like to discuss extenuating circumstances or are unsure if your work aligns, please contact education@moodyf.org and we would be happy to provide additional guidance.

1. **Are you able to address both pillars in one request?**

Yes, addressing more strategic pillars and/or focus areas may strengthen your application. However, note that you must be able to report on outcomes as a result of your work in order for it to qualify as aligning with a particular pillar or focus area.

1. **Can the Early learning application include Early Literacy and Math or just Early Literacy?**

The Fund’s priority for the K-3 space is Early Literacy. Including other program components will not disqualify you; however, primary consideration will be given to the Fund’s strategic pillars and focus areas.

1. **Can you speak to the age range for the postsecondary success focus?**

The postsecondary success strategic pillar encompasses grades K-12 (ex – career exploration, dual credit and CTE, etc.) and postsecondary activities (ex – college success, career readiness, etc.). Please see the description of this pillar on the webpage for additional details.

1. **As the M-Pact fund grows, do you foresee any of the focus area shifting or expanding?**

While this is a possibility, we anticipate maintaining the current strategic pillars and focus areas for the foreseeable future.

**FINANCIALS**

1. **How much funding should we request?**

The Education M-Pact Fund will provide approximately $20 million in grants annually to eligible organizations across the state of Texas. While there are no specific limits on request amounts, we encourage applicants to make requests totaling no more than 20% of the organization’s annual operating budget. This is a general guideline; all requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

1. **Can my organization receive a multi-year grant?**

Yes, we expect approximately half of M-Pact grantees to receive two- or three-year grants, with the remaining grantees receiving one-year grants. This does not include the rural cycle, during which we anticipate the majority of grantees receiving three-year grants. Each grantee may apply again once the term of the grant is complete. Please note that renewed funding is not guaranteed for previously approved grantees. Plans for sustainability of ongoing projects/initiatives once M-Pact grant funding expires will be considered in the application review process.

1. **How will grants be funded?**

The process for M-Pact Fund grant payments will mirror the Foundation’s standard grant payment process with funding initiated shortly after the trustee meeting in which the grants are approved. One-year grants will be fully funded with the initial grant payment. Subsequent payments for multi-year grants will be awarded in annual installments once reporting and related requirements have been met.

1. **What type of funding will be provided and are overhead/indirect expenses covered?**

The M-Pact Fund is open to grants within a variety of funding types including projects, operations, and capital funding. Priority will be given to the implementation of programs and projects. There is no specific cap on overhead funding; each applicant’s budget will be reviewed individually within the context of what is reasonable for the organization and/or proposed project.

Note: Colleges and universities are asked to limit their indirect cost rate to no more than 15%.

1. **We are requesting operating funds. Can the project and organization budgets we submit be the same?**

Yes, if all activities of your organization align with the M-Pact Fund’s eligibility criteria including at least one strategic pillar, you may apply for general operating funds. In that case, your project and organization budgets will be the same.

1. **If we do not have audited financials, will we be disqualified?**

If you do not have an audit, there is an option to submit an explanatory letter. If you do have a completed audit(s), you must submit those with your application.

1. **Budgets two to three years out won't yet be board approved. Can these numbers change?**

Yes. We understand that future year budgets will be approximate. You may add a note on the budget with the anticipated approval date.

1. **Would third party consultants or evaluators be able to be covered with the funding?**

Yes.

Note: During the rural cycle, evaluation activities will be funded separately by the Foundation through a designated technical assistance provider.

1. **If we ask for a certain amount, will you award less?**

Request amounts are a guidepost for our consideration. Trustees may approve grants with award amounts that are lower than request amounts shared in the proposal. If you have specific constraints or minimum funding levels needed to pursue the proposed scope of work, please detail that in the application (you may use the Grant Duration Constraints” field).

1. **Should travel costs to the grantee convening and participation in the grantee network be included in the proposal budget submitted?**

No, these will be assessed and paid out separately after grant contracts are completed. You should not include grantee convening or network costs in your budget.

1. **Does the foundation prefer projects that are already partially funded? Are you open to being the sole funder for a project?**

Support from other funders may be a plus. The main consideration will be your plan for sustainability of the project if/when funds from the Moody Foundation would expire.

1. **When listing funding sources for the project, may we include donations that have been awarded as operating expenses but that we are applying to cover part of the project’s costs?**

Yes, please just indicate that it is a partial grant allocation within the budget line item.

**APPLICATION PROCESS**

1. **Where can I find the application form?**

For open RFP cycles, a link to the application portal will be posted on this webpage on the date each application cycle opens.

For the rural cycle, an application link will be provided directly to invited applicants.

1. **What changes were made between Cycles 1 and 2?**

Cycle 2 includes minor changes to the application form. These are detailed in the Cycle 2 webinar. At a high level, changes include:

* Separate fields for Amount Requested by year.
* Removal of previously required year 2 and 3 line-item operating budgets (total projected amounts are still required).
* Provision of a multi-year [project budget template](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1N-xdB-WYpdpd0JHO_NFxlW7ylwSMJ0N-/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=100635916537739448275&rtpof=true&sd=true) (optional use).
* Clarification of attachment requirements.
* All attachments must be uploaded in PDF form.

No significant changes were made between Cycle 2 and 3.

Cycle 4 (rural communities) will use a similar application form and include support from technical assistance providers as well as Foundation staff.

1. **What are the reporting requirements?**

Grantees will be asked to submit one interim and one final report annually during the term of their grant. Interim reports will consist of a narrative update. Annual reports will include a narrative section, outcomes related to the grantee’s stated goals and objectives, and a budget to actuals financial update. Report templates outlining specific requirements will be furnished to grantees in advance of each report deadline.

Grantees selected through the rural cycle will be paired with an evaluation partner to support them in developing data tracking systems and reporting on outcomes.

1. **How should we plan to measure our selected key metric(s)?**

The application will provide a space for each applicant to identify the key metric(s) they will measure in relation to their grant. The list of available key metrics will be finalized and released when each application is posted. Applicants will also be asked to describe their evaluation process. Applicants are strongly encouraged to include use of an externally validated tool for measuring results within the selected key metric(s). For example, externally-validated tools for an Early Learning grantee would include but not be limited to those approved by the Texas Education Agency for measuring student progress in preschool ([full list here](https://tea.texas.gov/academics/early-childhood-education/early-learning-assessments/data-tool-selection-guidance)). Self-evident metrics such as your school’s graduation rates do not require use of an external tool.

Grantees selected through the rural cycle will be paired with an evaluation partner to support them in developing relevant goals, creating data tracking systems, and reporting on outcomes.

1. **If the project measures more than one metric, are we still to choose only one in this section?**

We encourage applicants to choose multiple metrics when able. Demonstration of a robust set of outcomes and accompanying evaluation process will be a key factor in application reviews.

1. **What are the required M-Pact grantee network activities?**

The Education M-Pact Fund provides benefits beyond grant funding to deepen the results of this work. These benefits will include at least one annual convening of representatives from each current M-Pact grantee organization. The full cost of the convening, including travel and related expenses for at least one grantee representative will be covered by the Foundation. The Foundation anticipates an initial convening in March 2025 at the South by Southwest Education Conference in Austin, Texas. Additional opportunities for convening and collaboration may be provided throughout the term of the grant. Specific details will be shared with grantees well in advance. The Foundation understands that unavoidable conflicts may arise and asks that grantees participate in these activities to the best of their ability.

1. **How does an open RFP differ from The Moody Foundation’s general grants process?**

The Moody Foundation’s [general grants process](https://moodyf.org/application-process/) enables applicants to propose any project that fits within the Foundation’s mission and vision. The open RFP is designed to provide more specific parameters for the type of applicants that are eligible for grants through the dedicated $20 million annual M-Pact Fund, and to also detail the trustees’ giving priorities within the fund. In addition, the open RFP has specific benefits and requirements related to its timeline, reports, and other grantee activities. Overall, the open RFP is designed to best serve and support grantees within the M-Pact Fund’s strategic pillars.

1. **What is the difference between each RFP cycle?**

The only difference between Cycles 1 and 2 is the timeline along with minor updates to the application form. Cycle 3 mirrored Cycle 2.

Cycle 4 is by invitation-only and dedicated to supporting rural communities.

Future funding cycles may include more narrow eligibility criteria.

1. **Can you speak to the letters of support? Who should those come from?**

There are no specific requirements for who submits a letter of support. Our purpose in reviewing these letters is to better understand your organization’s reputation and impact. Sample authors could include leaders of school districts with which you work, government officials who support your work, and customers/participants who have benefitted from your services, among others.

1. **May we reuse letters of recommendation from previous cycles or other applications (with permission of the writer)?**

Yes, if the context of the letter applies to the request you are submitting you may reuse it with permission of the writer.