

Ensuring Eligibility

Before you submit a proposal, your organization needs to show it is eligible for funding. This section explains the documents and information you need to prepare — and offers alternative paths for newer nonprofits. Don't worry if you're just getting started. There are flexible options, and MANGO can help you figure out what applies to you.

Organizational Requirements

- **Legal Status**: Nonprofits must provide legal documentation, such as certificates of incorporation or registration.
- **Tax Compliance**: Include tax clearance certificates or IRS determination letters (if applicable).

Financial Stability

Nonprofits must provide evidence of financial stability. Depending on organizational maturity:

1. **Established Organizations**
   - Three years of audited financial statements or equivalent records.
   - Evidence of diversified and consistent funding sources.
2. **Newer Organizations**
   - A detailed one-year financial report, financial projections, and a letter from a fiscal sponsor (see "Alternative Path for Newer Organizations").
   - Both pathways are considered equally valid for eligibility.

Options for organizations without three years of financial statements:

1. **One-Year Financial Report**
   - Summarize income, expenses, and funding sources for the past year.
   - Highlight key achievements or projects to showcase impact.
2. **Third-Party Validation**: Submit a letter of endorsement from a reputable fiscal sponsor or funding partner.
3. **Capacity Building Plan:** Outline strategies for financial management and future stability *(this can be a simple plan for training, budgeting, or strengthening your organization over time)*, including plans for external audits or financial oversight.

What if my organization doesn't have all the documents yet?

Start preparing the basics now. You can still meet with MANGO or delegation staff to discuss your idea and ask what's needed to move forward. New organizations may qualify using a simpler one-year financial report or support from a fiscal sponsor.

Alternative Path for Newer Organizations
For newly established nonprofits lacking historical financial documentation:

1. ***Provide Interim Proof of Stability**:*
   - *Submit start-up funding details or a financial plan demonstrating sustainability.*
   - *Include a letter from a fiscal sponsor or partner (a trusted group that can help manage your finances if you're a new nonprofit) verifying financial oversight.*
2. ***Focus on Transparency**: Provide a statement outlining plans to develop robust financial practices and secure long-term funding.*

Alternative Path for Newer Organizations:
Pro Tip: Don't let a limited financial history stop you. New nonprofits can qualify with a one-year financial report or fiscal sponsor support.

Project-Specific Criteria

- Clearly **identify** the community problem your project aims to address.
- **Demonstrate** alignment with legislative priorities, such as sustainability or social equity.

Checklist

- **Organization Proof**: Certificates of incorporation and tax clearance forms.
- **Supporting Documents**: Strategic plans, financial statements, and letters of support from stakeholders.
- **Fiscal Responsibility**: Detailed one-year financial report if audited statements are unavailable.
- **Supplemental documents**
  - For newer nonprofits, such as financial projections or fiscal sponsorship letters.
  - Capacity-building plan or financial oversight strategies.

How MANGO Can Help

- **Assist** in gathering and verifying legal and financial documentation.
- **Provide** templates and examples for financial stability plans and financial reports.
- **Offer** guidance on preparing supplemental documents, such as projections or fiscal sponsorship letters, for newer nonprofits.
- **Facilitate** connections with fiscal sponsors or partners to strengthen financial credibility.

Toolkit Resources referenced throughout this guide are available by request from MANGO or can be downloaded at mangocnmi.org