

Google.org Impact Challenge

Frequently Asked Questions

About

What is the Google.org Impact Challenge Columbia?

The Google.org Impact Challenge Columbia is an open invitation to nonprofits with a material presence in the Columbia Metro Area (Calhoun, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lexington, Orangeburg, Richland, Saluda, and Sumter Counties) to share their vision for innovative ways to make our community stronger by increasing economic opportunity. We call on the public to vote from among four selected projects for the project they believe will have the greatest potential for impact in the community. Winning organizations receive grant funding and Google training to help turn their ideas into reality.

Why is Google hosting the Google.org Impact Challenge in Columbia?

Columbia is known for its energy, rich culture, and entrepreneurial spirit. Grow with Google recently hosted an event in Columbia and the Google.org Impact Challenge is excited to continue to help create economic opportunity in the Columbia area.

Where can I read a full copy of the rules?

You can find the rules [here](#).

What if I still have questions?

Please contact us at us-impact-challenge@google.com. We will review every email and post responses to commonly asked questions on our FAQ here to ensure that all interested applicants have access to the same helpful information.

Criteria

What are we looking for?

Community Impact. Does the proposed project create economic opportunity in the Columbia area? Does it improve the lives of people in our community?

Innovation. Does the project provide an unexpected solution to an unmet need? Is it a novel application of a time-tested idea?

Reach. Does the project have ambitious goals and embody a big idea? Does it have the potential to scale directly or to serve as a model for other communities?

Feasibility. Is the team well-equipped to execute on the project and do they have a well-developed and realistic plan? Is the organization's leadership nimble and inspired?

Entry

Is there a registration fee?

No. Applying for the Google.org Impact Challenge Columbia is free.

How do I know if my organization is eligible to participate?

Review the [criteria](#) and the [rules](#).

What if I am not a registered nonprofit or in the process of registering now? Can I still apply?

You must be registered as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit at the time the application is submitted. However, if you are a fiscally sponsored organization, your fiscal sponsor can apply on your behalf, provided it is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit at the time the application is submitted. Please see the [rules](#) for more details.

What if I have a great idea, but my nonprofit isn't based in Calhoun, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lexington, Orangeburg, Richland, Saluda, or Sumter Counties?

The Google.org Impact Challenge Columbia is open to 501(c)(3) nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored organizations with a material presence in the Columbia Metro Area (Calhoun, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lexington, Orangeburg, Richland, Saluda, and Sumter Counties). If you believe your organization has a material presence in this area, we would encourage you to [apply](#). Please see the [rules](#) for details.

What if we're a local affiliate of a national organization? Can we still apply?

As long as you're a US 501(c)(3) nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored organization with a material presence in the Columbia Metro Area (Calhoun, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lexington, Orangeburg, Richland, Saluda, or Sumter Counties) at the time you submit the application, you are eligible to [apply](#).

What does it mean to have a material presence in Calhoun, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lexington, Orangeburg, Richland, Saluda, or Sumter Counties?

It is up to your organization to determine whether you feel that your presence in the Columbia Metro Area (Calhoun, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lexington, Orangeburg, Richland, Saluda, and Sumter Counties) is material. If in doubt, please apply. Per the [rules](#), all projects will be partially evaluated based on the impact they can have on the Columbia Metro Area.

What if we're a nonprofit based in the Columbia Metro Area, but do work outside of the area? Can we still apply?

Yes, as long as your organization has a material presence in the Columbia Metro Area (Calhoun, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lexington, Orangeburg, Richland, Saluda, and Sumter Counties) at the time of your application.

Can we apply if we're a for-profit business with a social impact?

Unfortunately, no. The Google.org Impact Challenge is only open to qualified registered 501(c)(3) nonprofits (or fiscally-sponsored organizations) with a material presence in the Columbia Metro Area (Calhoun, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lexington, Orangeburg, Richland, Saluda, and Sumter Counties).

Can my organization submit more than one idea?

No. In general, organizations may only submit one application to the Challenge (there is an exception for colleges and universities, below). Fiscal sponsors can submit more than one application if they are applying on behalf of multiple sponsored groups.

What if I work for a large organization, like a university, that has many departments - can we submit multiple applications?

Colleges and universities are permitted to submit more than one application, provided only one application per faculty or staff member authorized to represent the university or college is submitted. See the [rules](#) for full detail. If not a college or university, each eligible organization is only allowed to submit one application, so please be sure to coordinate with others in your organization who might apply.

Can my organization submit a joint application with another organization?

Only one organization can apply per application, but it is fine if that application references collaboration with another organization. If your organization is selected as a winner, it may work with other organizations to complete your proposed project, as long as your organization complies with the [rules](#) and the terms of the grant agreement.

Projects

What do you mean when you say “project”?

A project is your organization’s proposed concept and implementation plan for how you will create more economic opportunity in your community. If selected for a grant, we’ll be supporting the implementation of this project - so we need to know exactly how the grant will help you realize your plan.

If another organization is currently implementing a similar concept, can we still submit the idea?

Yes, but please note that projects will be judged in part on their innovative approach and potential to scale. So you’ll need to tell us how and why your implementation is innovative for the community, why your organization is uniquely suited to implement the concept in a way that will be more successful, or how you plan to partner with other organizations to achieve success.

Does this have to be a new idea for my organization?

It need not be brand new. In fact, it may already be a work in progress. If so, we would like to hear exactly how a grant will change the trajectory of your progress toward implementation, scale, and impact.

Over what time period should the grant funds be spent?

We expect the grant to be spent over the course of one to two years.

Can the grant be used to fund overhead and staffing costs?

Yes, but the large majority of the award should be devoted to the implementation of the project.

Will details of our project idea be kept confidential?

Google will not treat your project as confidential or proprietary, and the details of your project will be shared with Advisors and possibly others to evaluate your proposal, so please do not submit any proprietary or confidential information in your application. Please keep in mind that if your organization is selected as a winner, your project summary will be made available to the public on the website.

What is a fiscally-sponsored organization?

A fiscal sponsor is a 501(c)(3) organization that provides oversight for a project by another organization

or group that is not a 501(c)(3). We encourage you to reach out to your legal counsel if you have questions about the fiscal sponsorship legal structure. In the case of the Google.org Impact Challenge, the fiscal sponsor must apply on behalf of the sponsored project or group.

Process

Can I get a copy of the application questions before I fill out the application?

Yes, you can find a copy of the application questions [here](#).

Can we include appendices or additional information to the application?

The application includes an opportunity to provide links to additional resources. Unfortunately, we are not able to accept any attachments beyond those linked as additional materials in the application form.

Can I save a draft of my application on the site if I want to edit it later?

No. Applications can't be saved for later completion, so we recommend drafting your responses in a separate document first and only completing the application form when the entire application is ready for submission.

How do I make sure my application is successfully submitted?

Make sure all required fields are populated and within the given word limits, then click the "Submit" button. If the application has been successfully submitted, you should see a screen with a message confirming that we received your application, and you should also receive a confirmation email to the email address you provided. If you have any questions about your application submission, please contact us at: us-impact-challenge@google.com.

I've submitted my application. What do I do now?

That's great news. No further action is required. We'll reach out if we require any additional information, and will announce the finalists per the timeline on the website.

Does my submission have to be in English?

Yes, please submit your application in English.

Do I need a Google account to apply?

No, you don't need a Google account.

How will the entries be judged?

All applications received will be reviewed by a team at Google and a panel of Advisors. Applications will be evaluated based on the Challenge rules. A total of four nonprofits will be selected as winners. The public will pick one People's Choice Winner from the four winners during a public vote running in September 2018.

Who are the Advisors?

See our panel of Advisors [here](#). The Advisors are selected based on both their demonstrated commitment to improving their communities and their ability to rally public support for the best ideas.

What if an advisor has an affiliation with an organization who applies?

We ask advisors not to be involved in scoring applications from any organization they are personally

affiliated with (for example, if an advisor or their family member are on the board of the organization). The application's score will be determined only by the remaining advisors.

Will every single application be reviewed?

Yes, we will review all eligible applications received.