



# Regional Giving Program

## Giving Guidelines

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Thank you for your interest in the Ross Stores Regional Giving Program. Ross invests in a small number of direct grants to federal tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations, schools, and government programs that serve a community in an area where we have a large presence and many Associates, as described below. We consider funding organizations that are strongly aligned with our philanthropic mission. Organizations must meet the specific guidelines outlined below. Ross will welcome requests for one-year grants of \$10,000, \$20,000, or \$30,000, and will consider funding both general operations/overhead and specific programs.

### Our Philanthropic Mission Statement

At Ross Stores, we invest in brighter futures by supporting programs that unlock the full potential of the next generation. With a goal of building competence, confidence, and character in young people facing socioeconomic challenges, Ross partners with organizations that work in our communities to advance academic achievement and build life skills.

### Grant Cycles

In 2026, we will have three grant cycles.

All eligible and interested organizations must register and submit a Letter of Inquiry through our online portal by the deadline for the submission period. After review, only a select number of organizations that strongly align with Ross' mission will be asked to submit a full proposal. Any organization that has received grants three consecutive years is not eligible to apply in 2026. We do not accept Letters of Inquiry via mail, email, or fax.

Letter of Inquiry Submission Periods:

- **Cycle 1:** February 16 – March 6, 2026
- **Cycle 2:** July 6 – July 24, 2026
- **Cycle 3:** September 28 – October 16, 2026

We expect to award approximately 60 grants total between these three grant cycles.

### Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for a donation, your organization **must**:

1. **Be a federal tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization, school, or government program.**
2. **Serve a community in an area where Ross has a large presence and many Associates, which are the following areas:**
  - Arizona: Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, West Phoenix
  - California: San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles Area\*, Moreno Valley, Perris, Shafter
  - Pennsylvania: Carlisle
  - South Carolina: Rock Hill, Fort Mill
  - Texas: Sealy, Brookshire, Greater Katy Area, West Houston

*\*Eligible programs in the Los Angeles Area will serve the communities north of Long Beach, south of Burbank and Pasadena, and west of I-605.*



While Ross has a large presence in other areas, such as New York City, the Regional Giving Program only serves those areas listed above. Organizations that do not meet the geographic criteria may be referred to our [Store-Based Giving Program](#).

- 3. Have not received a donation from Ross within the past 12 months.**
  - Ross will only make one donation per year to each organization.
  - One exception to this requirement is that organizations that have received gift cards or a small Store-Based Giving grant within the past 12 months may apply for a Regional Giving grant.
  - Organizations that have received a grant three (3) years in a row must wait out one (1) full grant-cycle year before applying for additional support. For example, if an organization was awarded a grant each year from 2023-2025, they cannot reapply again until the equivalent grant cycle in 2027.
- 4. Not discriminate against any category protected by Federal, state, or local laws** in who they serve and also in who they hire. Ross is committed to equal employment opportunities (EEO) regarding the hiring, acceptance, and appreciation of every individual. See Ross' EEO statement [here](#). Applicants will be asked to affirm that they do not discriminate in their programs or in their hiring practices.
- 5. Align with our philanthropic mission to create brighter futures by building academic achievement and life skills in economically disadvantaged youth, ages 3-24.**
  - Please review the list of eligible and ineligible populations and programs.

## Eligible Programs

**Academic Achievement:** *Programs that build a foundation of academic competence that will help young people succeed in a competitive workforce. These include:*

- Literacy
- STEM/STEAM
- Tutoring
- School clothes/supplies/technology for learning\*
- GED programs
- Stay-in-school efforts
  - Anti-truancy
  - Attendance support
  - Drop-out/re-entry
- College readiness
  - SAT/ACT preparation
  - Counseling for financial aid, grant applications, and loans
  - Scholarship programs

**Life Skills:** *Programs that build confidence and character in young people. These include:*

- Mentoring
- Financial literacy
- After-school programs that include academics or life skills listed here
- Leadership skills
- Career readiness/job skills
  - Mock interviews
  - Professional dress
  - Resume writing
  - Retail- or fashion-specific career programs, *excluding* fashion shows

\*We recommend that organizations requesting technology for academics first explore all other cost-effective means, such as in-kind donations, before applying for a grant from Ross.



## Ineligible Programs

While we understand that there is a great need across our communities, in order to deliver the greatest impact on our philanthropic mission, Ross will not support programs outside of our focus areas. Ineligible programs include:

- Medical and health programs
- Youth sports, sports teams or clubs, and recreation activities
- Programs for babies or youth under 3
- Fine arts and art museums
- Religious-focused programs\*
- Cash reserves or endowments
- Political or advocacy support
- Direct support for individuals
  - Individual scholarships or tuition
  - Research or travel grants
  - Stipends or fellowships
  - Personal assistance
  - Conferences
  - Training or learning programs
  - Travel for any event
  - Mission trips
- Research
- Event sponsorship
  - Sober graduation parties
  - Prom, homecoming, or other school dances
  - Galas
  - Walk-a-thons
  - Golf outings
  - Benefits
  - Conferences or seminars
- Animal welfare
- Capital campaigns or building upgrades
- Publications
- School field trips

\*Ross will not support organizations or programs that spread political or religious beliefs. Ross will also not support any program which requires exposure, adherence to, or conversion to any religious doctrine to be a beneficiary of the program. A direct service program run by a faith-based organization may be eligible if the program's beneficiaries are not encouraged or required to learn about, adhere to, or convert to that organization's religious doctrine as a condition of receiving services from or attending the program.

## How to Apply

### Step 1: Review Giving Guidelines and Eligibility Requirements

Review the guidelines and requirements listed above.

### Step 2: Eligibility Quiz

The eligibility quiz will help determine whether organizations and programs are aligned with our mission and comply with our guidelines. [Take the eligibility quiz.](#)

### Step 3: Letter of Inquiry

Upon completion of the eligibility quiz, eligible organizations will be prompted to register and complete an online Letter of Inquiry, which is a series of questions about the grant proposal. Submission of the Letter of Inquiry does not constitute a grant application. Information requested about the organization and planned use of the funds will help us determine whether there is alignment with Ross' mission and objectives. We ask that organizations limit their submission to one Letter of Inquiry. We do not accept submissions via mail, email, or fax.

Due to the high volume of submissions, we are unable to provide feedback on Letters of Inquiry that are not accepted.



#### **Step 4: Full Proposal by Invitation Only**

Following our review of the Letters of Inquiry, Ross will contact organizations that are most aligned with our mission approximately one month following the Letter of Inquiry deadline and invite them to submit a full grant proposal online. If further information is needed about the grant proposal, a Ross representative will contact the organization. We will announce a decision on awards within three to four months of the grant proposal deadline.

#### **Other Information**

Ross is not responsible for any proposal related expenses incurred by organizations at any step in the grant application process. Grant policies and requirements are subject to change without notice, and become effective immediately upon posting to this website. The interpretation of these policies is wholly within the discretion of Ross Stores, Inc. or the Ross Stores Foundation. All grants are made at the discretion of Ross Stores, Inc. or the Ross Stores Foundation. Qualification under the policies listed on this website does not entitle an organization to receive a grant. We reserve the right to decline to make any grant requested.