

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Funding Opportunity Title: Community Investment Fund Grant Cycle

Issuing Agency: Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority

Overview

The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority is pleased to announce the availability of **\$270,000 in no-match grant funds** through its **Community Investment Fund (CIF)** program. This program supports initiatives that contribute to the advancement of maritime activities, navigation, and other port-related interests. The funding opportunity is designed to foster economic development and job creation.

- Minimum award: \$25,000
- Maximum award: \$100,000 per organization

Background


On October 11, 2018, the Port Authority's Board of Directors adopted **Resolution 2018-28**, which created the Community Investment Fund (CIF). The Board also established a **CIF Committee** to provide recommendations on programs and organizations that can serve as community partners through CIF grant awards, with a focus on workforce development, economic advancement, and quality-of-life improvement.

The CIF is funded through the Port Authority's development financing activities, with **10% of revenue from certain development finance programs** allocated to the fund. The CIF aims to provide capital access to eligible entities and expand equitable participation in maritime sector jobs.

Since its inception, the CIF has received approximately **\$852,000 in funding** and has awarded roughly **\$575,000** in no-match grants to qualifying organizations.

About the Port Authority

The mission of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority is to **foster job creation and economic prosperity** by providing maritime transportation facilities and services, project financing, and by addressing public infrastructure, environmental, and quality-of-life challenges. The Port supports over **\$7 billion in annual economic activity** and more than **23,000 jobs** across its operations.



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Eligible Entities

Eligible applicants must be nonprofit organizations registered under applicable state or federal laws. Entities must be directly involved in one or more of the following areas:

- Maritime activities
- Workforce development
- Community development
- Sustainability-related programs

Eligible Uses of Funds

Grants may support:

- Maritime infrastructure development and maintenance
- Navigation safety and efficiency improvements
- Environmental sustainability initiatives
- Workforce development, job training, and career advancement
- Community development initiatives
- Projects promoting international trade and commerce
- Research aimed at improving logistics operations
- **Note:** Grant recipients must be located in **Cuyahoga County**

Ineligible Uses of Funds

Grants may not be used for:

- Lobbying or political activities
- Payment of past-due or late local, state, or federal taxes
- Entertainment expenses (e.g., parties, galas, recreational events)
- Personal expenses not directly tied to project implementation
- Projects completed prior to award notification
- Legal disputes or litigation costs
- Activities that conflict with the Port Authority's mission or values

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Application Process

Applicants must submit a complete proposal and required supporting documentation by the application deadline. Proposals must include:

- Proposed use of funds
- Explanation of alignment with the Port Authority's mission, the CIF program goals, and the current Strategic Plan
- Key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics to define success

Detailed application instructions are available at: www.portofcleveland.com

Important Dates

- **Application Opens:** May 1, 2025
- **Application Deadline:** June 15, 2025
- **Award Notification:** July 10, 2025 (at the Port Authority Board Meeting)

Selection Process & Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- Thoroughness and completeness of the proposal
- Project scope and alignment with CIF objectives
- **Professional References:** At least three required; may include other grantors or letters of support
- **Financial Review:** Although no match is required, applicants must submit a financial statement, organizational structure, and staff/board roster. Preference may be given to organizations that can contribute financially, but the Port also prioritizes those with limited access to funding.
- **Jurisdictional Coverage:** Priority is given to applicants within the Port's territorial jurisdiction, with an aim to equitably distribute funds across Cuyahoga County
- **Project Composition:** Relevance and quality of the proposed project
- **Workforce Development:** Applicants must demonstrate how their project supports a diverse workforce and promotes community representation

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Grant Compliance Requirements

Grantees must:

- Attend a Port Board of Directors meeting to respond to questions or concerns
- Sign a Grant Agreement
- Use project funds within **12 months** of agreement execution
- Disclose any potential conflicts of interest with Port staff or board
- Report on KPIs and metrics during the project and at conclusion; additional updates may be requested

Contact Information

For questions regarding the CIF Program or the application process, please email:

✉ CommunityInvestment@portofcleveland.com

DISCLAIMER

The Port Authority reserves the right to modify or cancel this funding opportunity at any time without prior notice. All funding decisions are final and not subject to appeal. This Notice of Funding Opportunity does not constitute a contract or promise to enter into an agreement with any applicant. Final awards are subject to approval by the Port Authority's Board of Directors and compliance with all applicable laws.