

DESIGNER BRANDS FOUNDATION



COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The Designer Brands Foundation is a corporate charitable foundation established in 2023 to support the community in partnership with DSW Inc, our Brands, and our associates.

MISSION:

The Designer Brands Foundation works to advance empowerment of individuals by removing barriers and helping them put their best foot forward in the diverse communities in which we live, serve and work.

Funding Criteria

Your organization must:

- Show tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code if in the US;
- Demonstrate that your specific program/proposal falls within the scope of the Designer Brands Foundation mission statement;
- Apply for a program that serves all or a portion of the Foundation's target demographic, which is underserved communities close to our stores and/or corporate offices and/or logistics centers.
- Provide documentation to Designer Brands verifying financial and non-profit status;
- Show that the program or project in your proposal has a positive impact on the surrounding community;
- Be inclusive in policies and practices involving all genders, races, ages, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or creed, with no religious component required of participants. You may be asked to submit a copy of your most recent organizational diversity and inclusion policy or elaborate on how you maintain inclusive programs and practices.

Application Process

The Designer Brands Foundation grant application and reporting process is entirely digital. Please visit our Grant form to submit your application. Paper or email versions of proposals will not be accepted.

Timeline

The Designer Brands Foundation has two public grant cycles per year; applications will need to be submitted before the cycle deadline to be considered for that round. When one cycle closes, the next opens.

The upcoming Community Grant Program deadlines are:

Fall Cycle: October 16, 2026

Spring Cycle: April 16, 2027

Non-profit organizations can only receive one grant per calendar year.

Grant Amounts

If an organization is NEW and has not yet received funding from the Designer Brands Foundation, we ask that you submit a proposal for a grant of \$5,000. This \$5,000 can support a new or ongoing program, and you can have additional funders if necessary.

If an organization has received funding from the Designer Brands Foundation before, your organization is eligible to apply for a grant in the range of \$5,000 - \$10,000.

Please carefully consider what funding your program requires and be specific about the financial need in your application. Please do not apply for more than \$10,000 unless directed otherwise. All grants are issued in \$ USD.

Award Process

You can expect to hear about your grant application approximately 4 weeks after the cycle deadline. All organizations will receive an email update. Those organizations awarded grants should expect a physical check in the mail.

Re-Application

If your proposal was declined, you are welcome to re-apply in a later cycle.

Documents Needed

You will need to upload a copy your W-9, a copy of the current IRS determination letter indicating a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status, and the program budget for this project.

Ineligible Programs

The Designer Brands Foundation will NOT contribute to:

- Organizations that are not recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
- Individuals or families Organizations that discriminate based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, creed, color, sex, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, age, national origin, veteran status, medical condition, physical or mental disabilities, or any protected category under federal, state, or local laws.
- Event sponsorships
- Scholarships
- Associate matching donations
- Religious or sectarian organizations
- Schools, including activities such as bands, sports teams, choirs, proms, after-proms, graduation, etc.
- Social clubs (ex. sororities/fraternities)
- Political candidates/committees/organizations
- Publications, displays, advertising, audio or video productions
- Fraternal, labor, social or veterans' organizations

Frequently Asked Questions:

When should I apply and when can I expect to receive funds?

Please see below for when Designer Brands Foundation will be accepting applications during the 2026 fiscal year and when organizations can expect decisions to be made about their proposal:

Fall Cycle - DEADLINE: October 16, 2026 - DECISION: by November 20, 2026

Spring Cycle - DEADLINE: April 16, 2027 - DECISION: by May 21, 2027

I am having technical issues with the grant application form.

Please use the chat or email - found by clicking the question mark in the top right corner of the application.

Additional Questions

Please reach out to DBGives@dswinc.com for any additional questions about eligibility, application status, timeline, or any other related topics.