

Canopy Project Selection and Management

I. General

Projects do not necessarily have to receive funds from or through Canopy, they may receive only services, advice or other non-financial support including use of our 501c3 status if the project is in accord with our mission. Projects may be local, national or international.

II. The Five Keys we look for in a Successful Canopy Project

We review Canopy Project Proposals based on 5 key elements: Passion, Competency, Impact, Return on Investment and having a Committed Champion.

(1) Proven Passion

Dictionaries define passion as being “ruled by intense emotion or strong feelings”. We would add to this definition, “governed by drive and obsession”. How do we know if you are passionate about your project? Some indicators are, if it’s a project you’d start (or have started!) even if you couldn’t get paid to work on it or were retired; or a project you are bootlegging at work or doing on “your own time”; or one you are daydreaming or thinking about in the middle of the night; or even worse, a topic you are beginning to bore your friends with.

(2) High Competency and Capacity

Passion creates something great when coupled with competency. By competency, we mean experience, education, and aptitude. You don’t need a PhD in your project area but you do have to have an observably strong background and level of experience. More generally, we look for a history of self-management and starting and finishing projects within the timeframe and budget proposed.

(3) Significant Impact

Real change occurs when passion and competency is focused on a project that has the potential to make a difference in our world, locally or globally. We are very open to supporting proposals that may fail and you don’t necessarily need to quantify the difference your project could make, but you do need to be able to articulate WHY you believe your project is impactful.

(4) Exceptional Return on Investment

Canopy is interested in projects that build on investments; projects that with a little bit of additional funding can yield big results. Projects with exceptional return on investment are those where portions of the project are shared with other organizations, where overhead is low, and projects show efficiency in costs and approaches to project implementation. Canopy is not looking for starting programs or maintaining programs, but to nudge or be a catalyst for change in established programs.

(5) Committed Champion

Canopy, as an organization, is cooperatively managed by otherwise independent Project Directors working on disparate projects. The strength of our organization resides in an unbroken lineage of mutual respect and trust. For this reason, new Project Directors must have a formalized connection with an existing member of the Canopy Community who is willing to act as “Champion” for your project. Champions take direct responsibility for both you and your project and during the Project Application stage, they have to be able to satisfy other members of the Canopy Community that they have enough knowledge of you as well as the experience and background needed to contribute to your project success.

III. How to Apply

Project Proposals are submitted by filling out the Project Proposal Application at this website <https://sites.google.com/view/canopyworks>

IV. Approval/Rejection and Questions from the Reviewers

- It is likely that you will receive questions and suggestions from Canopy Members before your application is voted on and you will have an opportunity to make changes to your application.
- New Projects are voted on quarterly. Project Voting Periods end one month after the end of the quarter they were submitted (ie. Jan 1-March 31 quarter applicants will hear before May 1).
- Projects are approved if, before the end of the voting period, Two-thirds (2/3rds) of Canopy Members actively vote “YES” AND Two-thirds (2/3rds) of Board members actively vote “YES”. Board Members are generally expected, but not required, to vote “yes” on projects that are approved by the Canopy Membership.

V. Project Funding and Fees

- Project Directors are responsible for securing and maintaining their own funds although Projects are generally approved before funding is secured since many projects need to have approval as a 501c3 project before they can be funded.
- During the application process, an existing Canopy Sponsor may become interested in funding or doing a matched grant for your project, so you should apply even if you don't have a strong plan for funding what you want to do.
- A small portion of funds that pass through Canopy may be used to cover overhead/administrative costs of Canopy. The portion of funds reserved for general overhead/administrative fees is decided cooperatively by existing Project Directors and is currently set at 0%.
- Individual Projects may incur extra legal, accounting or staff costs due to special needs and/or non-compliance. Those fees will be assessed as necessary. It is expected that most of these needs/extra costs become apparent during the Project Selection period so that the project and budget can be adjusted before it is voted on for approval.

- Projects that are not self-sustaining will be allowed to end naturally. There should be no expectation of financial support from Canopy to fund Projects that haven't raised enough money on their own.

VI. Canopy Oversight and Liability

- Canopy minimizes overhead and legal liability through the use of Grants. More specifically, Project Directors may be members of Canopy, but they work independently, not as Canopy staff. Their individual projects are funded through separate Canopy Grants.
- Although Project Directors work independently on their own grant project will operate independently, it will still be subject to ongoing peer review and reporting requirements as described in the [Grant-based Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement with Canopy](#)