Healthy Meck Shared Gifting Eligibility & Application

About the Healthy Meck Shared Gifting Circle

Healthy Meck is launching a new, community-centered approach to funding through a **Shared Gifting Circle**. In this model, organizations apply to participate as a cohort and, if selected, work together to help decide how funding is shared across the group.

Rather than competing for limited resources, participants engage as peers—sharing project ideas, learning from one another, and participating in collective decision-making. This approach places more power in the hands of organizations doing the work every day and strengthens relationships across the North Mecklenburg community.

This pilot Shared Gifting Circle is supported by **The Duke Endowment's Healthy People, Healthy Carolinas initiative**. Healthy Meck is working with the **Charlotte-Mecklenburg Food Policy Council** for fiscal and administrative oversight, and **Community Food Strategies** will support facilitation of the Shared Gifting process.

What Is a Shared Gifting Circle?

A Shared Gifting Circle is a group process where organizations come together to learn, share, and discuss community needs. Each participating organization receives a base grant, and the cohort collectively decides how to distribute the remaining funds.

Through the Circle, organizations will:

- Share their project ideas and plans
- Learn about each other's work
- Discuss shared community needs and challenges
- Participate in group decision-making about funding
- Stay connected as projects move forward and lessons are shared

This process builds trust, lifts up community knowledge, and encourages collaboration rather than competition.

More Than Funding

While the Shared Gifting Circle includes grant funding, the value goes beyond dollars. Participants also gain:

- Feedback and insight from peer organizations
- New relationships across the North Mecklenburg community
- Space to reflect, learn, and adapt their work
- A deeper understanding of what other groups are doing locally

Sharing lessons—including successes and challenges—helps strengthen the broader community ecosystem.

Shared Gifting Funding Structure

A total of **$42,000** will be distributed through this Shared Gifting Circle with a cohort of **eight (8) participant organizations**.

- Each selected organization will receive a **guaranteed unrestricted baseline award of $3,000**.
- The remaining **$18,000** will be distributed through the Shared Gifting process, with participants collectively engaging in decisions about how these funds are allocated across cohort proposals.

Final award amounts will be determined by participants through the Shared Gifting Circle. Organizations should be prepared to adjust their project scope based on the final funding amount received.

Project Scope & Alignment with Healthy Meck

Projects supported through the Healthy Meck Shared Gifting Circle must advance **Healthy Meck's Policy Agenda**, which focuses on:

- **Access to Healthy Food**
- **Access to Health Information**
- **Access to Community Support**

Proposed projects should address at least one of these focus areas. This may include efforts that increase access to nutritious food, help neighbors find or understand health information, or strengthen community-based support systems.

Projects should be **rooted in the community** and shaped by people who live and work there, particularly in Healthy Meck's partner neighborhoods. Shared Gifting can support both existing, ongoing work as well as new projects needing funds for implementation.

Funding is **unrestricted** and may support staffing or operational costs, provided the work aligns with Healthy Meck's Policy Agenda.

Who Should Apply

This opportunity is intended for **community organizations working directly with neighbors in North Mecklenburg**, including:

- Cornelius
- Davidson
- Huntersville

For this first Healthy Meck Shared Gifting Circle, applicant groups should:

- Be a nonprofit organization **or** connected to a fiscal agent
- Be actively working in North Mecklenburg
- Support at least one area of Healthy Meck's Policy Agenda

- Be able to fully participate in the Shared Gifting process
- Have a total **annual** organizational budget of $600,000 or less

The goal is to support organizations that know their communities well and are already doing work that makes a meaningful difference. This pilot is designed to support small, community-rooted organizations with limited access to flexible funding. Organizations with annual budgets above this threshold are encouraged to support the work through partnership rather than applying directly.

For questions or support, please contact:

Participation Commitment (Required)

Shared Gifting is a cohort-based, relational funding process. To be eligible, **two representatives from each selected organization** must be able to participate in **all required sessions**:

- **Shared Gifting & Equity Overview (Virtual):** Friday, March 6
- **Proposal / Pitch Session (Virtual):** Friday, March 20
- **In-Person Shared Gifting Circle:** Tuesday, March 31

The same two representatives are expected to participate in all sessions to support continuity, relationship-building, and shared decision-making.

Availability for these dates must be confirmed prior to applying, as full participation is a condition of funding.

Project Timeline

- **Application Opens:** Monday, February 9
- **Application Closes:** Friday, February 20, 1159pm
- **Application Review:** February 23 – February 27

- **Cohort Notifications:** Monday, March 2
- **Shared Gifting & Equity Overview (Virtual):** Friday, March 6
- **Proposal / Pitch Session (Virtual):** Friday, March 20
- **In-Person Shared Gifting Circle:** Tuesday, March 31
- **Funding Period:** April – October

Applicant Responsibilities

Applicants selected to participate in the Shared Gifting Circle will be expected to:

- Complete brief pre-work prior to the Shared Gifting & Equity Overview session
- Participate in required virtual and in-person sessions
- Submit a proposal developed collaboratively by multiple members of the organization
- Identify the organization or fiscal agent that will receive funds
- Participate in shared learning, discussion, and funding decision-making

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Application Format & Submission

- **Application Format:** Online form
- **Submission Deadline:** Friday, February 20

Applicants will be asked to provide basic information about their organization, project, and participation capacity.

How Applications Will Be Reviewed

Applications will be reviewed by a panel of reviewers. Reviewers will not have access to identifying information about applicants and will focus their feedback on:

- Alignment with Healthy Meck's Policy Agenda
- Community impact and relevance
- Readiness to participate in a Shared Gifting process

Application Questions

We encourage thoughtful, concise responses. Answers for each question should be at least one sentence and no more than half a page. Please keep in mind that the funds for this work are intended to support outcomes aligned with the Healthy Meck Policy Agenda in your community.

Contact Information

1. What organization or group are you representing?
2. Who are the two representatives for this project?
    - Name
    - Email
    - Phone number
    - Role within the organization

Organizational Information

3. Organization or fiscal agent that will receive funds (nonprofit, fiscal sponsor, etc.).

Project Proposal

4. **Proposal Description:**
   Describe what your group would like to do with these funds and how you will do it. Include any collaborations this project will support.

5. **Alignment with Healthy Meck:**
   Which area(s) of Healthy Meck's Policy Agenda does your project support, and how?

6. **Community Impact:**
   How will this project positively impact your community?

7. **Equity & Community Engagement:**
   How does your project reflect community knowledge, lived experience, or leadership from the people most impacted?

8. **Shared Gifting Perspective:**
   What values or considerations do you think should guide funding decisions within the Shared Gifting Circle?

9. **Budget:**
   Provide a simple budget describing how funds would be used. Funding is unrestricted and may support general operating expenses, including staff time, as long as the work supported aligns with Healthy Meck's Policy Agenda and the project described in this application. Projects should be designed to operate with the $3,000 baseline award, with flexibility to scale if additional funds are received through Shared Gifting.
   <Add link to budget form>

10. **Success:**
    How will you know if your project has been successful? Please list at least one way you will measure success.

Agreements

- We confirm that the same two representatives can attend all required Shared Gifting sessions (March 6 (virtual), March 20 (virtual) and March 31 (in-person).
  ☐ Agree ☐ Cannot agree (please explain)
- We confirm that our organization's total annual operating budget is $600,000 or less.

  ☐ Agree ☐ Cannot agree

- We understand that our application will be shared with other cohort participants as part of the Shared Gifting process.
  ☐ Agree ☐ Cannot agree

Thank you. We are excited to support you in funding one another's work!