



# 2025 APPLICATION GUIDELINES



Read these guidelines carefully before completing Red Umbrella Fund's online application form.



Submit a completed application online in English, French, Russian or Spanish at:

<https://www.redumbrellafund.org/apply-for-a-grant/>  
before 28 July 2025 (18:00 CET).

**\*\*\* PLEASE NOTE: FOR SECURITY PURPOSES WE WILL ONLY ACCEPT APPLICATIONS THROUGH OUR ONLINE SYSTEM \*\*\***

You may submit a draft of your application before 4 July 2025 to [applications@redumbrellafund.org](mailto:applications@redumbrellafund.org) for early feedback

## 1. Who can apply?

### **ELIGIBILITY:**

Red Umbrella Fund provides funding to sex worker-led organisations and networks that are:

- based in any country;
- registered or unregistered;
- led by people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

0. Does your organisation fall into any of the following categories, which disqualify you from funding?

- Organisations that seek to end or criminalise sex work
  - Yes
  - No
- Organisations exclusively providing social or medical services, income-generating activities, or credit programmes
  - Yes
  - No
- Organisations founded by or structurally dependent on political parties, government agencies or religious institutions
  - Yes
  - No
- Organisations that are businesses or whose main strategy is making a profit
  - Yes

- No
- Organisations requesting this grant for academic research
  - Yes
  - No
- Requests from individuals
  - Yes
  - No
- The organisation has a project with or for sex workers, while the organisation as a whole has a broader focus.
  - Yes
  - No

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you are not eligible to apply.

### 1. Is your organisation led by sex workers?

To be eligible, each of these points must be met:

- **Decision-making body:** At least 60% of the decision-making body must be sex workers. This can include former and current sex workers but with at least an aspiration to include current sex workers.

- **Spokespeople:** At least 60% of the people who speak on behalf of the organisation must be sex workers.

- **Staff:** At least 33% of the staff are sex workers, with the same contracts and working conditions as other staff in the organisation.

### 2. Is your organisation’s mission focused on sex work and is your organisation’s main focus to support sex workers’ rights?

*If your mission does not explicitly state sex work: please explain why, and how is your main focus to support sex workers’ rights.*

### 3. Is your organisation strengthening the sex workers’ rights movement?

To be eligible, each application needs at least one reference from a sex worker-led organisation. Most applications also need a second reference, which can be from an allied organisation.

Note that groups that have been a grantee in the past 3 years do not require a second reference; only a reference from a sex worker-led organisation. For example, in 2025, 2022 and 2023 grantee-partners need 1 reference, but 2021 grantee-partners need 2.

Red Umbrella Fund requests references for all applications that appear to meet our eligibility requirements prior to being scored by our Programme Advisory Committee (PAC). Contacting references is not an indication of a grantmaking decision.

References are asked to confirm the eligibility of the applicant organisations and to provide information on their relationship with the applicant organisation.

Red Umbrella Fund may seek references from other organisations than the ones included in the application (e.g. if the references provided are not known to us as a sex worker-led organisation or if your references are unresponsive).

*To limit the work from the movement and the Secretariat, Red Umbrella Fund will use positive references for the year they have been requested and the following year with the limitation of one positive reference from the previous year per application and only in case the main contact(s) of the applicant organisation remained the same and the mission of the group has not changed.*

### 4. Does your organisation agree with the values and operating principles of Red Umbrella Fund?

To be eligible, your organisation must agree with the following values and operating principles.

- **Autonomy:** We respect the self-determination of sex workers.
- **Sex work is work:** We oppose criminalization and all forms of stigma and discrimination against sex workers. We recognize that sex work is work.
- **Rights-based:** We commit to supporting advocacy for rights-based policies, laws and practices that are rooted in evidence of what works, as analyzed from sex workers’ perspectives.
- **Ownership:** We believe that sex workers must be in charge of the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs and policies that affect them.

- **Diversity:** We embrace the diversity of sex workers and support sex workers of all genders, sexualities, and life experiences. We also recognize that some sex workers are particularly impacted by intersecting forms of marginalization and commit to including them in all our work.
- **Accountable:** We commit to advocacy and funding processes that are transparent and accountable to the sex workers' rights movement.
- **Learning:** We commit to learning and using what we learn to inform our grantmaking and advocacy and to demonstrate the value of working collaboratively.

## 2. Our priorities and grantmaking recommendations:

Our International Steering Committee (ISC) has directed our Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) to evaluate your application based on the following factors:

⬆. Does your organisation's work contribute to Red Umbrella Fund's vision and mission?

⬆. Does your organisation demonstrate an inclusive approach towards marginalised groups within the sex workers' movement?

⬆. Does your organisation demonstrate a commitment to community involvement in decision-making processes and shared leadership?

The mission of Red Umbrella Fund is to strengthen and ensure the sustainability of the global sex workers' rights movement by catalysing new funding specifically for sex worker-led groups and national and regional networks.

The vision of Red Umbrella Fund is to see a world where sex work is recognized as work and where all sex workers enjoy health, labour, and other human rights.

\* For organisations whose members are individuals OR work within a single country, PAC looks at this additional factor:

⬆. Does your organisation work towards change for sex workers' rights in government, policies, laws, enforcement, legal systems, service provision or public opinion?

\* For organisations whose members are organisations AND work in multiple countries, PAC looks at this additional factor:

⬆. Does your organisation work to:

- build (organisational and advocacy) capacity of sex worker groups in their region;
- link groups to each other as a way to jointly share, strategise and build solidarity;
- increase the visibility of local and national concerns in key regional or global advocacy spaces to improve the human rights and work conditions of sex workers?

Finally, PAC prioritises organisations with annual budgets below the following threshold amounts:

- 200,000 euros for organisations whose members are individuals OR work within a single country;
- 300,000 euros for organisations whose members are organisations AND work in multiple countries.

The Application includes questions intended to provide the PAC with information about your organisation. You may find it useful to have these in mind as you prepare your Application.

Following the initial scoring of eligible applications, the top-scoring applications are then discussed and scored by the full Programme Advisory Committee (11 PAC Members or less taking into account conflict of interest) during their annual meeting. During their meeting, they will score applications within each region a second time in light of the priorities mentioned above and the following grantmaking recommendations:

1. Provide grants to groups in all regions of the world, as much as funding restrictions allow - Regional diversity (see part 2. What kind of grants do we give? – Where are the grants made?)

2. Reach a diversity of sex workers of all genders.
3. Include groups that work at local (town/city, district, provincial) and national levels.
4. Prioritize advocacy, with added clarification to prioritize groups that raise human rights concerns that are not already central to the sex worker movement (such as Indigenous rights, migrant rights, groups that bring in new voices or new issues into the overall agenda).
5. Prioritize groups that struggle to access other funding options.

### 3. What kind of grants do we give?

#### Type of funding

Red Umbrella Fund provides flexible **core funding** to support the general coordination, functioning and strengthening of a group, organisation or network and its members. Core funding can be used to cover the self-identified needs of the grantee partner including registration costs, rent, salaries, advocacy, (peer-led) capacity building, membership meetings, activities, etc. Our funding is flexible; therefore, grantees can adjust their plans during the grant.

Red Umbrella Fund wishes to affirm its commitment to sex worker-led, participatory, core, flexible funding. Core flexible funding means that organisations will be asked to provide a workplan and a budget on how they wish to use the grant according to their priorities. The grantee organisation will then report on their progress and will be able to request changes to their workplan and budget as their situation and/or the context evolves.

When determining your budget for your request ("Grant Request Information" - Section 7), you may also want to consider the following:

#### Size of the grants

Grants are between 10.000 and 130.000 EURO **for two years**. See the table below for more details. Please note that the final grant amount awarded can differ from your initial grant request.

If your group or network has not had much income before, you are not likely to get a grant of more than 20.000 euros.

Grant sizes (Euro) (for 2 years)	Criteria
10.000 - 40.000	○ Organisations that are <b>less than 2 years old</b> .
16.000 - 80.000	○ Organisations working mainly at a <b>local level</b> (city, province, etc.). <b>national level or international level with individual members that are more than 2 years old</b> .
30.000 – 130.000	○ <b>Regional networks</b> (organisations whose members are mostly organisations and work across multiple countries) that are <b>more than 2 years old</b> .

#### Number of grants

Red Umbrella Fund expects to make 25 to 35 grants in 2025. The exact number of grants will depend on the actual grant sizes as determined by our sex worker-led Programme Advisory Committee (PAC), the participatory decision-making body in our grantmaking structure.

#### Where are the grants made?

Red Umbrella Fund is committed to awarding from 20 to 30% of its grantmaking budget to regional networks. Once the funds available have been attributed to regional networks, Red Umbrella Fund is committed to funding and supporting sex workers' rights movements in all regions of the world. Our sex worker-led International Steering Committee has directed PAC to distribute the remaining funds relatively evenly over four geographic regions every year: Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America and Spanish-speaking Caribbean, and North America/non-Spanish-speaking Caribbean/Europe/Central Asia. Due to the limited number of grants, it can make a year, Red Umbrella Fund is unlikely to fund two grants in the same year in the same country. Exceptions have included countries with a high

number of inhabitants, a particular number of applications and/or countries earmarked by particular donors of Red Umbrella Fund.

## 4. How to apply?

\*\*\*We are only accepting online applications.\*\*\*

Increased concerns around digital security are impacting our community. To prioritise the safety and security of your data, we will only accept applications through our online system.

This allows us to better protect the confidential information of your organisation and your members. We are available to answer questions at [applications@redumbrellafund.org](mailto:applications@redumbrellafund.org) and encourage groups to begin the application as soon as possible to allow time to identify any questions you may have.

- ⇒ Go to: <https://www.redumbrellafund.org/apply-for-a-grant/>
- ⇒ Select the online form for your preferred language. Fill in the online form (**English, French, Russian or Spanish**).
- ⇒ Submit your application online by **27 July 2025 (24:00 CET)**.

### Tips:

- ⇒ You can save your online application and return to it later. You may resume using the link at the top of the online form. You will also receive an email with a link to your online form.
- ⇒ On the last screen, you will have a preview of your application. Before you submit you may use the “Print this form” function to save a copy of your application.

#### Red Umbrella Fund Application Form for Groups 2020

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☒ Save my progress and resume later | [Resume a previously saved form](#)

Resume Later

In order to be able to resume this form later, please enter your email and choose a password.

Your Email:

A Password:

Confirm Password:

- ⇒ If you want to work offline, there are forms (.doc) available for you to download at <https://www.redumbrellafund.org/apply-for-a-grant/> You can prepare the application offline and copy-paste your answers into the online form. However, you **must** submit your final application through the online system.

## 5. A few tips for completing the application form:

↑ Your applications will be reviewed by the Programme Advisory Committee. The Programme Advisory Committee is made up of 11 individuals from around the world with at least 80% of sex workers. Please use the space provided in the application to describe:

- Your organisation’s background and vision, including any of your organisation’s successes you would like to highlight (Section 2)
- The context your organisation is working in including any progress or challenges for sex workers in that context (Section 3)

- Your organisational structure including describing how your organisation reflects a commitment to sex workers' involvement (Section 4)
- Organisational relationships including your references (Section 5)
- Your financial situation, i.e. budget for the last two years (Section 6)
- The grant request information including a description of what you hope to use the funding for as well as a budget (Section 7)

You may also provide information that is not included in any of your other answers in "Additional Information" (Section 8). You may find it useful to share links to materials that are relevant to your application.

🚫 Make sure you send in your application through the online forms. We do not accept application forms via email.

🚫 Respond to all questions - incomplete applications will not be considered.

🚫 The Contact Information includes the email address for both your organisation and your Contact Person. Be sure to check these carefully. These are the two addresses our automated system will use for sending notifications regarding the outcome of your grant. We will also use these to verify any inquiries about your application from any other email address.

🚫 Make sure the contact details of your references are complete and correct. Be sure that at least one of them is from a sex worker-led organisation.

🚫 Please spell out any abbreviations or acronyms the first time you use them. They may have a different meaning in other regions.

🚫 An international panel of sex workers will read your application and select the new grants using the priorities shared above. Use the application form to explain why your organisation best meets these criteria and priorities!

🚫 Be mindful that many organisations are in need. Please only ask for the funds your organisation actually needs and can spend well within two years.

🚫 Try not to wait until the last moment to send in your application – you may risk missing the deadline because of a computer or internet failure.

🚫 When you finish your application, on the final screen please review all the information carefully before you hit "submit" and **print and save a copy for your records**.

You will receive an automatic confirmation by e-mail. If you do not receive a confirmation e-mail, we have not received your application. You must re-submit your application so be sure to save a copy before you submit the final application.

## 6. What happens when an application is submitted?

Once received, the applications are reviewed by the Secretariat against the eligibility criteria mentioned in these guidelines and reference requests are sent out.

Most eligible applications deemed eligible are then shared with and scored by 3 Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) Members.

The top-scoring applications are then discussed and scored by the full Programme Advisory Committee (11 PAC Members or less taking into account conflict of interest) during their annual meeting.

The criteria used by the PAC Members to score applications are defined in these guidelines in part 2: "Our priorities".

The scores will be used along with other priorities mentioned in these guidelines for the PAC to make funding decisions that are then sent to the International Steering Committee for approval.

Some eligible applications are deprioritised by the Secretariat.

In 2019, the International Steering Committee gave the Secretariat the power to deprioritise applications that are particularly weak if: the organisation is at least 2 years old; and if the application is not from an organisation that is the only eligible applicant from its country. In such a case the

application should be scored by 2 Secretariat members. If they do not agree, they will be discussed with the team and a third secretariat member will also score. The deprioritised applications and the scorecards will be made available to all PAC prior to their selection meeting. They are welcome to challenge this decision and ask that the application be sent to PAC to be scored.

The following timeline summarises the selection process:

June – September:	<b>Applications are screened by staff</b> using criteria and references
August – October:	<b>Applications are peer-reviewed by the sex worker-led Program Advisory Committee (PAC)</b> using the criteria and priorities mentioned above
October:	<b>The final selection is made by the PAC</b> also using the funding (restrictions) available and considering geographic and gender diversity
October:	<b>Grants selection is approved by the sex worker-led International Steering Committee (ISC)</b>
26 October – 1 November:	<b>All applicants are informed of the final selection.</b>
15 December:	<b>All new grant contracts are made.</b>

## **7. What does it mean to receive a grant from Red Umbrella Fund?**

Successful applicants may not receive the amount they requested. Successful applicants will be contacted by the Secretariat to work together on an updated workplan and budget and to provide information to disburse the funds.

A grant is not a donation. The grant is regulated through a contract and annexe documents including conditions and requirements which allow us to remain accountable to our International Steering Committee, our donors, and our host organisation.

Examples of these requirements include:

- Every six months the grantee-partner gives a progress update, based on a reporting format provided by the Red Umbrella Fund (these include short six-monthly implementation updates and annual narrative and financial reports).
- Payment of the grant is made in several instalments during the grant period.
- The grantee-partner must retain all supporting documents for organisational expenses made for a minimum of seven (7) years.
- For organisations with an annual income above € 150.000, the contribution from Mama Cash should appear in an audited annual report and/ or an audit report.
- The Secretariat of Red Umbrella Fund has experience working with new organisations and organisations that have not received funding before. We are available to provide accompaniment to support organisations in meeting these requirements.

## **8. Help!**

- Questions? Check our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page here:
- <https://www.redumbrellafund.org/faq/> For other questions about the application form or process email us at [applications@redumbrellafund.org](mailto:applications@redumbrellafund.org)
- If you want advice on your draft application, e-mail us **before 4 July 2025** at [applications@redumbrellafund.org](mailto:applications@redumbrellafund.org). You may use the offline form to submit a draft for feedback, but you must use the online system to submit your final application to be considered.
- We strive to respond to questions within two working days.



## **About Red Umbrella Fund**

Red Umbrella Fund is the first global fund *by and for* sex workers. Since its creation in 2012, Red Umbrella Fund has made 352 grants to sex worker-led organisations in over 68 countries. Grantees are selected through an international review process in which sex workers are the main decision-makers.

Red Umbrella Fund believes that change will only be achieved through strong, collaborative movements of sex workers advocating for their rights, with the support of allies. Sex workers themselves are the best positioned to know what is needed for them, and best placed to do something about it. Our strategic priorities focus on promoting sex workers' human rights, building the capacities of sex worker groups, and strengthening and sustaining the sex workers' rights movement.

### **Where does our funding come from?**

Red Umbrella Fund is extremely grateful to the following funders for their support: American Jewish World Service, Dreilinden, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Count Me In! 2.0), Dutch Postcode Lottery (NPL), Equality Fund, Foundation for a Just Society, Mama Cash, Oak Foundation, Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, and a few wonderful individual donors (you know who you are!).

### **More information?**

For more information, go to: [www.redumbrellafund.org](http://www.redumbrellafund.org) or contact us at [info@redumbrellafund.org](mailto:info@redumbrellafund.org).