

About the Community Service Fund Board of Trustees

The MIT Faculty established the MIT Community Service Fund (CSF) in 1968 to provide funding and support to MIT student, staff, and faculty volunteers in the local community. The Community Service Fund Board (CSFB) stewards the CSF by 1) reviewing volunteer applications and awarding financial grants that empower MIT volunteers to carry out their service initiatives; 2) allocating financial support to local nonprofits with MIT volunteers; and 3) determining financial support to PKG Public Service Center's programs, including the Social Impact Internship.

The Community Service Fund is administered by the Office of Government and Community Relations. The CSF Board of Trustees is a Standing Institute Committee appointed by the MIT President. The board consists of members across MIT including faculty, students, staff, and alumni/ae.

MIT Community Service Fund's Mission and Guidelines

CSF's work fosters a culture of philanthropy at MIT and creates new learning and leadership opportunities for our students and colleagues. It builds essential neighborhood connections and advances MIT's mission of serving the local community, the nation, and the world.

The CSF's guiding principles enacted in 1968 are still in use today, including:

- fund projects with educational value to MIT students;
- strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation between MIT and surrounding communities;
- invest in initial and interim support for projects to create lasting change;
- promote equality of opportunity within the community through the activities we support; and
- provide funding directly to projects and initiatives—not staff salaries or stipends.

Applications

Grant applications for MIT-community projects are accepted in the spring and fall; the application period is one month. On average, the CSF receives five applications each cycle and funds between two to four grants. Approved grants may be for full or partial funding, depending on the proposal and how the CSF grant will support the project's budget. Projects are eligible for funding up to three times. With close financial oversight, the board typically prioritizes projects where the grant would contribute to essential and reusable materials (like robotic kits or certifications) that serve as an investment rather than expendable and one-time food or transportation costs.

During the spring application cycle, the board reviews requests from the [PKG Public Service Center](#) and the [Office of Government & Community Relations \(OGCR\)](#). These requests amplify



the support of MIT volunteerism in the local community. The CSF grant to the PKG Public Service Center supports their Social Impact Internship program. Local nonprofits with MIT volunteers are also eligible to apply in the spring. Based on OGCR's deep partnerships with local nonprofits, OGCR reviews these nonprofit applications and provides a recommendation to the board. The board then votes on this recommendation.

How is the Community Service Fund Supported?

The Community Service Fund is MIT's focused workplace giving program and raises donations from staff, faculty, alumni/ae, and retirees. 100% of the contributions go directly to local volunteer projects or nonprofits, maximizing the impact of each gift by ensuring that every dollar provides the greatest possible good.

In 2021, the CSF formalized a long partnership with [Community Giving at MIT](#), combining resources and streamlining efforts. The CSF also works closely with a network of service-minded individuals and organizations across the Institute, such as the Priscilla King Gray (PKG) Public Service Center and [MindHandHeart](#), to strengthen MIT's commitment to its mission of service.

CSFB Meetings

The board meets twice a year (November and April) via Zoom for approximately two hours to discuss and vote on grant applications. Ahead of meetings, the board reviews and comments on the grant proposals, which average five applications per cycle. The meetings also provide an update on finances and outreach activities. Other time-sensitive updates are provided to the board via email. Occasionally, an ad-hoc meeting may be scheduled when necessary.

CSFB Roles

Faculty Chair

The faculty chair of the CSFB leads meetings and facilitates productive dialogues. Ahead of the meeting, the chair approves and provides input on agenda topics. During the grant review portion of the meeting, the chair leads the voting process to reach a consensus. Additionally, the chair reviews new trustee appointments. The chair also provides guidance on organizational matters. The faculty chair's term is three years with an option for renewal.

Secretary

The board's secretary is filled by an Office of Government and Community Relations staff member. In addition to supporting the board conversation, the secretary meets with prospective volunteer and nonprofit applicants to offer guidance and insights. The secretary and chair set the meeting agendas. The secretary's term is three years with an option for renewal.



Staff

The board is staffed by the Office of Government and Community Relations. The staff member ensures the board's decisions are enacted by working with grant recipients to transfer funds, receive updates and project summaries. The staff member serves as the main point of contact for trustees and applicants and prepares the meeting materials, including application summaries, outreach updates, and current financials. The staff member is responsible for record keeping.

Trustees

Trustees are the core component of the board. They vote on grant applications and raise comments and concerns for board-wide discussion. Students and post-docs serve one-year terms and faculty and staff serve three-year terms - both of which are eligible for renewal.

Ex Officio Members

The CSFB also includes ex officio, non-voting members who bring important context to the grant application process, often having worked with applicants in the past. They bring a perspective and knowledge of community needs and advise the trustees' discussion. Ex officio members include representatives from the Office of Government and Community Relations, Community Giving at MIT, and the PKG Public Service Center.

