

FAQs

Agreements for Good Application



How is an “agreement” different from a program, initiative, or service delivery project?

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Are networks, communities of practice, training institutes, or field-building efforts eligible for Agreements for Good funding?

Can intermediaries or organizations that regrant funds apply?

The application references new collaborations vs established collaborations. How do you distinguish between a new collaboration and an established one?

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How is an “agreement” different from a program, initiative, or service delivery project?

Docusign’s mission is “to help redefine the way the world comes together to agree.” Thus, for Docusign Foundation’s Agreements for Good grant program, an agreement focuses on how multiple organizations work together, not just what one organization delivers.

Programs and initiatives typically describe activities led by a single organization. Agreements, by contrast, define shared commitments across partners; such as how decisions are made, how power and responsibility are shared, how data or resources are governed, or how accountability is upheld over time.

Examples of agreements we are looking to fund are cross-organizational governance structures, shared frameworks, and cross-organizational commitments that make durable, collective action possible.

What kinds of collaborations are Agreements for Good designed to support, and what kinds are not eligible?

Agreements for Good is designed to support multi-organizational collaborations where distinct organizations or partners are coming together to reach agreement on how to solve a complex problem related to one of the issue areas we fund: (1) Climate & Environment, (2) Data Privacy & Security, or (3) the Future of Work.

We are not able to fund:

- Standalone programs or services led by a single organization
- Communities of practice or learning networks focused primarily on information sharing
- Social movements, field building, or advocacy efforts without a defined agreement-building focus
- Intermediaries seeking to regrant funds to others
- Collaboration that is primarily about service delivery for one organization

While these efforts are important, Agreements for Good is specifically focused on cross-organizational agreements that clarify roles, governance, decision-making, commitments, and shared accountability.

Are networks, communities of practice, training institutes, or field-building efforts eligible for Agreements for Good funding?

Generally, no, unless they are explicitly organized around developing a specific, cross-organizational agreement.

Agreements for Good **does not fund** networks or communities of practice that are primarily focused on:

- Professional development or training
- Knowledge-sharing or learning cohorts
- Field-building, movement-building, or awareness-raising
- Supporting educators, practitioners, or organizations through curriculum, resources, or convenings alone

While these efforts are deeply valuable, Agreements for Good is narrowly focused on funding agreements between organizations; for example, shared governance structures, decision-making frameworks, accountability mechanisms, or formal commitments about how multiple organizations will work together to solve a defined problem.

A helpful way to assess fit is to ask: “Would this funding result in a clear agreement that changes how multiple organizations coordinate, govern, or share responsibility; beyond learning or alignment?”

If the primary outcome is a stronger network, better-trained participants, or shared understanding (without a concrete agreement among organizations), the work is likely not a fit for this program.

We encourage organizations doing important field-building or training work to explore other Docusign programs, such as Docusign for Nonprofits, which supports nonprofits through discounted access to Docusign products.

Can intermediaries or organizations that regrant funds apply?

No. Agreements for Good does not fund regranting models or intermediaries whose primary role is distributing funds to others.

The lead applicant should be an organization that is actively participating in the collaboration itself, helping to design, hold, or implement the agreement alongside partners. Funding is intended to support the work of coming to agreement, and not to pass funds through to unrelated projects.

The application references new collaborations vs established collaborations. How do you distinguish between a new collaboration and an established one?

We use a simple three-part test.

A collaboration is considered **established** if **all three** of the following are true:

1. **Committed partners:** You already have multiple (>3) organizations or partners that have agreed to work together (not just expressed interest).
2. **Active collaboration:** Those partners have already been meeting or working together in some way such as through regular meetings, joint activities, or shared work.
3. **Existing agreements or commitments:** You have at least some shared agreements in place about how the collaboration works. This could include a defined purpose, shared norms, decision-making process, governance structure, or collaboration model (even if informal or evolving).

If your collaboration does not meet all three of these criteria, it should be considered a new collaboration.

New collaborations are still forming: they are identifying partners, building trust, exploring shared goals, and/or testing whether partners want to commit to working together more formally.

When in doubt, we encourage you to apply as a new collaboration and describe honestly where you are today. We value clarity and self-assessment more than being “fully built.”

How many organizations need to be involved, and what does “working together” actually mean?

Agreements for Good supports multi-organizational collaborations.

At a minimum, eligible collaborations involve:

- Two or more organizations working together for one-time projects
- Three or more organizations for multi-year grants

“Working together” means more than coordination or contracting. Partners should share decision-making, contribute distinct roles or resources, and participate in shaping agreements together.

A single lead organization directing vendors or contractors does not meet this standard.

What role does a backbone or lead organization play in an Agreements for Good collaboration?

Most collaborations have a backbone or lead organization that serves as the primary applicant and point of coordination.

This role often includes convening partners, facilitating decision-making, managing shared processes, and holding the collaboration together over time. The backbone helps ensure the collaboration has the structure and support needed to function effectively.

We recognize that backbone capacity can look different at different stages, and we value honesty about what is resourced today versus what is still emerging.

Are indirect costs allowed?

No. Agreements for Good funding may not be used for indirect costs (e.g., depreciation, rent, general admin or operations staff, general fundraising/marketing expenses).

Funding should be tied directly to collaboration infrastructure, such as facilitation, convenings, backbone coordination, shared tools, research, or communications that support agreement-building across partners.

We do support staff time when it is clearly connected to these collaboration-specific activities.

How should we think about scope, timeline, and grant size for an agreement-focused project?

Agreements for Good supports requests that match the scope of the agreement work.

Grants may be:

- One-time grants between \$20,000–\$100,000, or
- Multi-year grants of up to two years, with a maximum of \$200,000 per year

We encourage applicants to request the amount and duration truly needed to reach meaningful agreements, rather than defaulting to the maximum. Strong proposals clearly define what the collaboration aims to agree on, why that work is achievable within the proposed timeline, and how funding will support that arc.

What makes an application strong when reviewed against the evaluation rubric?

Strong applications clearly connect a real-world problem to agreement-based solutions in one or more of our three priority areas: Climate & Environment, Data Privacy & Security, or Future of Work.

In particular, strong applications:

- **Clearly describe the larger issue facing the community or sector**, not just the collaboration itself. They explain why this issue matters and what is at stake if it remains unresolved.
- **Make a clear connection to at least one of our priority areas**, showing how progress on this agreement could advance climate and environmental outcomes, digital trust and data protection, or people's ability to thrive in a changing world of work.
- **Explain why agreement is needed, not just action**. They describe what has made collaboration difficult in the past and why shared agreements are essential to making progress now.
- **Demonstrate real collaboration**, including how partners share leadership, decision-making, and responsibility, and how communities most affected by the issue are meaningfully involved.
- **Propose a realistic scope**, with a timeline and budget that match the stage of the collaboration and the specific agreements being built or strengthened.
- **Show a learning mindset**, including openness about uncertainty and a willingness to reflect, adapt, and share insights.

We are not looking for perfect language or fully solved problems. We are looking for thoughtful applications that clearly explain why this issue matters, why agreement is the right lever, and how this work could move one of our priority areas forward.

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