Guidelines for Grantseekers

Our Mission

The Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation is dedicated to improving the quality of life in the Hancock County area by partnering with donors in their philanthropic giving, engaging in collaborative leadership and responsible grantmaking.

Introduction

The Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation is a nonprofit, publicly supported, philanthropic institution that manages a pool of charitable funds. The Foundation has been awarding grants for 50 years, first as the Dorney Fund of the Cleveland Foundation in the 1970s, then as The Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation beginning in 1992. This history of supporting the community in partnership with donors is a lesson in collaboration. The Community Foundation is proud to be a bridge between donors and organizations for the benefit of Hancock County.

Each year, the Foundation's Board of Trustees determines the amount available to award in the form of responsive grants that benefit Findlay and Hancock County. Responsive grants are funded by our Community's Endowment, a pool of unrestricted funds. The Foundation manages other funds that are donor directed for specific causes or organizations. Together these funds reflect the diverse charitable interests of our community and enable us to respond to a wide variety of community challenges and needs.

These guidelines are designed to provide information about applying for a responsive grant from The Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation. It explains policies, priorities, limitations, deadlines and other information you will need to know about the way we work and the factors that influence grantmaking decisions. As you work through the grant process, our community engagement staff is here to support you and guide you each step of the way. Please reach out to us with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Brian P. Treece

Brian P. Treece, Ed.D.
President & CEO

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There is no prescription to ensure success in obtaining a responsive grant. Each proposal is evaluated based on its potential benefit to the people living in our community at a given point in time - and on the imagination, resourcefulness and credibility of those submitting it.

However, it is suggested that the following format be used for your proposal and recommended that you examine your ideas carefully to strengthen them. Following these guidelines will save you time and will help you present your proposal in a clear and compelling manner.

Who is eligible for a grant?

Most responsive grants are made to tax-exempt, private agencies classified as 501(c)(3) organizations, public charities as defined by the Internal Revenue Service. Grants may also be made to governmental agencies. The programs we consider for support are in the Greater Hancock County area or will directly benefit Greater Hancock County residents, unless stipulated by the donor. It is recommended that grantseekers call The Community Foundation office at (419) 425-1100 for an appointment to discuss their ideas with community engagement staff before submitting a Letter of Intent.

What does The Community Foundation typically fund?

Successful applications typically address problems to be solved or opportunities to be seized in the Greater Hancock County area. Grant requests should include some or all of the following elements:

- Programs serving Hancock County residents.
- Programs that make a substantial difference in the quality of community life.
- Programs that avoid unnecessary duplication of services.
- Programs that demonstrate measurable outcomes.
- Programs that help nonprofit organizations build capacity and become more effective.
- Programs that include financial and other strategic commitments from funding organizations other than The Community Foundation.
- Programs that expand meaningful civic engagements and build social capital.
- Programs that address prevention as well as remediation.
- Programs that acknowledge and respect diversity and help bridge differences among individuals, organizations and communities.
- Organizations with fiscal soundness and plans for continuing their program in the future.
- Organizations that demonstrate sustainability.
- Organizations that facilitate collaboration among relevant groups.
- Organizations that use or expand upon demonstrated and documented best practices.
- Organizations that leverage change in the capacity of community-wide systems rather than

individual organizations.

- On a case-by-case basis, requests for technology funding will be considered as part of a program request if specific criteria are met. Contact community engagement staff to discuss.

What does The Community Foundation typically decline?

We are not likely to support the following:

- Sponsoring or attending conferences.
- Unnecessary duplication of existing services.
- Requests from individuals.
- Ongoing operating expenses.
- Annual appeals or membership drives.
- Fundraising projects, advertisements, endowment or debt reduction.
- Religious organizations for religious purposes.
- Community services such as police and fire protection.
- Travel for individuals or groups when it is the primary focus of the proposal.
- Staff positions for government agencies.
- Stand-alone books, films, or videos.
- Computer equipment.
- Medical research.
- Retroactive programs and projects.
- Partisan political advocacy.
- Capital requests or capital campaigns.*

*Capital projects must help meet a compelling community need, advance Community Foundation priorities and offer broad social benefits. When we do participate in a capital project, support is contingent on funding from other sources. Payment will not be authorized until the organization has raised a significant percentage of its total dollar goal.

What period do grants cover?

The grant period may vary depending on the proposed activities. The Community Foundation grants are awarded for a definite purpose and for a project to be accomplished in a specific period of time. Typically, grant periods range from as short as six (6) months to as long as three (3) to five (5) years. A semi-annual report including a budget update and narrative must be submitted every six months.

Letter of Intent

The Community Foundation responsive grant process is now completed entirely online. The link to the online responsive grant process can be found on The Community Foundation's website (www.community-foundation.com) under Grant Opportunities. All requests should be submitted through the Foundation's online platform. Potential grant applicants are required to submit a LETTER OF INTENT through the online platform as the first step (due dates can be found on page 7). The Community Foundation staff will review the proposed project as described in the Letter of Intent for eligibility under grant guidelines and appropriateness of requested grant amount. If minimum benchmarks are met, The Community Foundation staff will contact you to request submission of a full grant application using the online system.

Please include the following information in the online Letter of Intent:

- WHO? Introduction to your agency.
- WHY? Description of community need. Support this with local statistics.
- WHAT? Statement of project's goal and objectives and expected project outcomes. Please include answers to the following questions:

  - What will be done?
  - What difference will it make?
  - When will changes be seen?

- HOW? Statement of project approach.
- WHEN? Projected timing of grant request.
- HOW MUCH? Estimate of total cost and amount of The Community Foundation request.
- WITH WHOM? Explain other funding partners and collaborators committed to the project.

Preparing the Grant Narrative

If you are invited to submit an online grant application, carefully review the following section. Write clearly and simply. Avoid jargon that may be used exclusively by your organization or by those in your field. Keep in mind that the more tightly organized your proposal, the more persuasive you are likely to be.

Successful proposals will answer the following questions:

- Is proposed project a solution to a community problem?
- Is proposed project supported by other funding partners?
- Does proposed project build organizational and/or community capacity?
- Is proposed project sustainable after the grant period expires?
- What will success look like?
- How will success be measured?
- Please describe how program recipients' input was obtained in designing this program and how it will be obtained in evaluating its success?

You should cover the following information, as appropriate, in your online grant application.

1. Your Agency's Background

- Mission
- Founding date
- Major programs
- Links with similar organizations
- Number and capacity of staff

2. The Project You Propose **

- The specific community need or policy issue you will address
- The changes that will occur in the community and with the target group as a result of the program
- Your project's goals/objectives/outcomes (include a completed Logic Model)
- Why your plan is cost-effective
- The activities you propose to address the problem or build community assets
- Why your organization is best-positioned to do the work
- Other providers of this service in the area
- Distinctive features of your project
- Expected contribution to knowledge in the field
- Relationship to your agency's overall programming
- Highlight best practices or evidenced-based components of the project

3. Project Implementation Plan

- Your timeline: steps to be taken, by whom and when
- How many people, and who, will be served
- Names of cooperating organizations and assigned responsibilities
- Project staff and/or consultants
- Any advisory groups

** For projects working to address complex social issues, The Community Foundation expects that the grant applicant will follow the collective impact model and coalition building process and that the work planned is integrated into existing coalitions in Hancock County. Collective impact is a model that guides organizations from different sectors to agree to solve a specific, complex social problem using a common agenda, aligning their work and using common measures of success. In order to create lasting solutions to complex social problems on a large-scale, organizations need to coordinate their efforts and work together around a clearly defined goal. For more information on the collective impact model and coalition building process, please contact community engagement staff at The Community Foundation.

4. Project Continuation

- If the project is ongoing, your plans to continue after the funding period
- A strong sustainability plan is a key component in a successful proposal
- Future funding sources
- Other current funding sources

5. Project Evaluation

- Project goals, activities and outcomes (include a completed Logic Model)
- Methods for measuring successful outcomes
- Benchmarks of success
- Submit progress reports as detailed in the grant award letter and terms of agreement

Required Attachments

The following required attachments should be uploaded as part of the online application process.

- A copy of your organization's tax-exempt letter from the IRS
- A copy of your organization's annual report
- A list of your organization's current board members
- A copy of your organization's financial statements, including balance sheet
- A copy of your organization's latest 990 tax return
- A copy of your organization's affirmative action policy or statement of non-discrimination
- Letters of support (if applicable)
- Project drawings/designs (if applicable)

After You Submit Your Proposal

Community engagement staff will contact you to discuss the project as part of the proposal review. The community engagement staff may conduct research, make site visits with The Community Foundation's grants committee, interview your staff or board and talk to other experts in the field or community. During this time, community engagement staff may also suggest ways to refine your proposal. It is important for community engagement staff to understand the proposal as fully as possible to be totally prepared to answer questions that may arise at the Board table. The Community Foundation will decide to fund (in full or in part), decline or defer the proposal.

When A Grant Is Awarded

After the Board of Trustees meeting, you will receive notification of the funding decision. If your proposal is funded, a Terms of Grant Agreement will be sent to you through the online platform for your signature. The Terms of Grant Agreement, along with the grant award letter and grant proposal, are the governing documents for The Community Foundation funding. The Terms of Agreement outlines the limits and conditions under which the grant has been authorized. It also includes a payment schedule. Please note that the Terms of Grant Agreement is a binding contract detailing duties and responsibilities of both parties (The Community Foundation and grantee agency).

Project reports will be required at six-month and year-end intervals, including a final report. Reports will be submitted using the online platform. Between reports, please contact community engagement staff to discuss any anticipated changes in project activities or uses of funds. All changes must first be approved by The Community Foundation staff. The due dates of the reports are included in the Terms of Grant Agreement. We require that any unexpended funds be returned to The Community Foundation.

Deadlines

We want to give your proposal the time and attention it deserves, so the full proposal deadlines fall three months prior to each Board of Trustees meeting. Unless you have arranged for an extension, we will strictly observe these deadlines.

LETTER OF INTENT DUE first Friday of:	FULL PROPOSALS DUE first Friday of:	INTERVIEWS WITH GRANTS COMMITTEE:	BOARD DECISION:
OCTOBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY
JANUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY
APRIL	JUNE	JULY	SEPTEMBER
JULY	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER

The Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation
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For more information about The Community Foundation please call (419) 425-1100, visit our website www.community-foundation.com or stop by our office.