

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
OF GREATER FORT WAYNE

CONCEPT LETTER

GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS



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CONTACT INFORMATION

The Community Foundation is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and is closed on federal holidays. Funding questions can be directed to:

Contact: Christine Meek, Senior Program Officer, or Annette Smith, Grants Manager

Address: 555 E. Wayne St.
Fort Wayne, IN 46802

Phone Number: 260-426-4083

Fax Number: 260-424-0114

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COMPETITIVE GRANTMAKING OVERVIEW

The Community Foundation is made up of many different types of funds, including donor advised, restricted, field of interest, scholarship, and agency endowments. The majority of these funds do not accept unsolicited funding requests from nonprofits. The Community Foundation's Community Grantmaking Fund and Clarke Endowment Fund do accept such requests through a formal process described herein. **In addition, applications submitted to the Community Grantmaking Fund and the Clarke Endowment Fund are screened to determine their funding eligibility through other funds of the Community Foundation. No additional application or information is required for this consideration.** The following grant guidelines apply only to grants awarded from the Community Grantmaking Fund and the Clarke Endowment Fund.

These guidelines offer general guidance and are not a guarantee for success in obtaining a grant. Each proposal is evaluated on its potential value to Allen County; the quality of planning, leadership, support, and vision expressed; the relative need for the program proposed; and the **current funds available for distribution**. Due to the large number of funding requests, the Community Foundation can fund only a small portion of the requests received. An unsuccessful application does not reflect the worthiness of a particular project.

The Community Foundation is required to fully review and evaluate all funding requests, resulting in a decision-making and approval process that normally takes several months. The grant review committee reviews grant applications four times a year and presents recommendations to the board of directors at the board meetings in February, May, August, and November. A lack of requested information or an incomplete concept letter or application will delay the decision-making and approval process by several months.

ELIGIBILITY

Grants are made only to nonprofit organizations that have federal tax-exempt status as a section 501(c)(3) public charity or to government agencies (see limitations for government agencies under "What the Community Foundation Does Not Fund"). The nonprofit or government agency must serve the Allen County area. No grants are made to individuals other than those made through designated scholarship funds.

The Community Foundation does not respond to annual appeals for support or to widely circulated, generalized funding requests. Although the Community Foundation does not award grants from the Community

Grantmaking Fund or the Clarke Endowment Fund for religious purposes, grants for religious purposes may be awarded from other funds at the Community Foundation. Grants from other funds will be made in accordance to their specific guidelines.

The mission of the Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne states, in part, that we will “serve all the people of Allen County” to build a brighter future for our citizens. We believe that our community can best be served by a wide variety of charitable organizations that both reflect and serve different constituencies.

Our mission calls us to serve everyone regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or gender. Funding from our unrestricted endowments may be provided to a variety of charitable organizations that reflect the diversity of our community, and is subject to our “Funding for Religious Purposes” policy stated elsewhere.

We recognize that many high quality charitable organizations are motivated by their unique cultural and historic values and beliefs. While we encourage charitable organizations to strive to strengthen themselves through the value of a diverse group of staff and volunteers, and will give funding preference to such organizations, we may potentially support organizations that provide a unique community service regardless of their hiring and volunteer recruitment policies involving race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or gender.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

WHAT THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FUNDS

The Community Foundation encourages requests that are developed in consultation with other agencies and planning groups, increase coordination and cooperation among agencies, and reduce unnecessary duplication of services. Preference is given to funding requests that:

- Address priority community concerns;
- Encourage more effective use of community resources;
- Test or demonstrate new approaches and techniques in the solution of community problems;
- Are intended to strengthen the management capabilities of agencies; and
- Promote volunteer participation and citizen involvement in community affairs.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION DOES NOT FUND

The Community Foundation cannot meet every community need. We do not make grants from the Community Grantmaking Fund or the Clarke Endowment Fund for the following:

- Annual fund drives;
- Operating deficits or after-the-fact support;
- Endowment funds, except for endowment–building matching grants for funds held at the Community Foundation;
- Direct or grassroots lobbying;
- Religious purposes;
- Hospitals, medical research, or academic research;
- Public, private, or parochial educational institutions, except in special situations when support is essential to projects/programs that meet critical community needs;
- Governmental agencies, including public school systems, except in special situations when support is essential to projects/programs that meet critical community needs;
- Limited special-interest organizations, except when such support significantly benefits the disadvantaged; and
- Funding for sponsorships, special events, commercial advertising, films or videos, television programs, conferences, group uniforms, or group trips.

FUNDING FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES

The Fort Wayne community is the home of various faiths. We are fortunate to have many faith-based agencies that serve our community, some located in houses of worship and some at separate locations. The Community Foundation, with its mission to “serve all the people of Allen County,” provides funding to faith-based groups that meet certain guidelines through the Community Grantmaking Fund and the Clarke Endowment Fund as well as various other funds it manages. The Community Grantmaking Fund and the Clarke Endowment Fund allow funding to religious organizations for charitable purposes; the funds do not allow funding for religious purposes.

Grants and scholarships awarded from other funds at the Community Foundation are distributed according to their individual fund agreements, with recommendations from donor advisors, and final approval by the board of directors. Many of these funds do award grants and scholarships for religious purposes. **The guidelines herein apply only to the Community Grantmaking Fund and the Clarke Endowment Fund.**

To assist your agency in determining its eligibility to receive funding from the Community Grantmaking Fund and the Clarke Endowment Fund, we have included a sample list of eligible program characteristics and descriptions of previously funded faith-based organizations below. The lists are not comprehensive and should be used only as a guide. We encourage you to contact the senior program officer or the grants manager should you have questions about your agency’s funding eligibility.

Characteristics of eligible programs may include, but are not limited to:

- May be located in a house of worship;
- Separate nonreligious programs from religious programs;
- May use the same room, but not at the same time, for religious and nonreligious programs;
- Are open to all, regardless of religious affiliation;
- Abstain from religious worship, instruction, or proselytization (recruitment); and
- Eliminate required statements of belief from participants.

Descriptions of previously funded programs include:

- A soup kitchen operated out of a church;
- Transitional housing for homeless families run by a faith-based organization;
- Case management for families in need at a faith-based social service agency;
- Emergency housing located in various churches; and
- A food bank serving the unemployed out of a faith-based ministry.

GRANT CATEGORIES

AGENCY SUPPORT

- For general operating support or existing programs/projects.
- Only Agency Support requests are eligible for multi-year awards of up to \$75,000 a year for three years, totaling no more than \$225,000.
- Agencies that receive a multi-year award are not eligible to receive another agency support grant until the multi-year grant has expired.
- Agency Support grants may be awarded in the same grant cycle and 12-month period that a technology support or new program/project support grant is awarded. If you are requesting technology or new program/project, in addition to agency support funding, please submit an individual concept letter for each.

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

- Funding is for the purchase of computers, computer-related technology, telephone systems, audiovisual systems, security systems, etc.
- Technology Support requests are eligible for single year awards of up to \$50,000.
- Technology requests with support from more than one funder are encouraged.
- The Community Foundation will not make more than one grant within a 12-month period from the Community Grantmaking Fund and the Clarke Endowment Fund to the same organization for both Technology Support and New Program/Project support. Please do not submit concept letters for both technology and new program/project support at the same time.
- A Technology Support grant may be awarded in the same grant cycle and 12-month period that an Agency Support grant is awarded. If you are requesting technology funding and agency support funding, please submit an individual concept letter for each.

NEW PROGRAM/PROJECT SUPPORT

- Limited to new programs/projects (i.e., programs for which you are seeking start-up funding that are not currently running) with definite purposes covering a specified period of time. **To apply for funding for existing programs/projects, submit an Agency Support request.**
- Organizations are eligible to receive new program/project funding once every two years.
- Applicants are required to provide clear documentation of future funding for the program/project after the Community Foundation grant expires.
- Projects with support from more than one funder are encouraged.
- The Community Foundation will not make more than one grant within a 12-month period from the Community Grantmaking Fund and the Clarke Endowment Fund to the same organization for both New Program/Project Support and Technology Support. Please do not submit concept letters for both program/project and technology support at the same time.
- A New Program/Project Support grant may be awarded in the same grant cycle and 12-month period that an Agency Support grant is awarded. If you are requesting program/project funding and agency support funding, please submit an individual concept letter for each.

LIMITATIONS

Exceptions to the one grant per organization, per 12-month policy, may be made in cases when the organization requesting funding serves as the fiscal sponsor for another organization. Multi-year awards for up to \$75,000 per year may be awarded to organizations seeking Agency Support. The maximum grant award normally does not exceed \$50,000 for Technology Support or New Program/Project Support. It is strongly suggested that requests not exceed these guidelines.

COMPLETING THE CONCEPT LETTER

After thoroughly reviewing these guidelines, the completion of a concept letter is the first step in the formal grant application process. The Community Foundation requires a concept letter prior to the completion of a full application. If you are requesting technology or new program/project funding, in addition to agency support funding, please submit an individual concept letter for each. One original and five copies for a total of six are needed.

DEADLINE FOR CONCEPT LETTER

We strongly encourage grantseekers to submit their concept letters as early as possible. We do not accept e-mailed or faxed concept letters. Please schedule enough time to secure the required signatures for the Concept Letter Fact Sheet. In fairness to all, we do not accept late and/or incomplete concept letters for any reason.

ITEMS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR CONCEPT LETTER

Please attach the original and five copies (for a total of six) of the following items, in this order:

1. **Concept Letter Fact Sheet** (an additional “cover page” is not requested or necessary);
2. **Your original, dated letter** (two pages maximum), which describes your program and funding request;
3. **A detailed program budget** which clearly explains the program and/or technology expenses, existing and/or anticipated funding sources for the program, and the amount being requested from the Community Foundation (not necessary for unrestricted operating support);
4. **A detailed organizational budget**;
5. **A copy of the organization’s 501(c)(3) determination letter** (for agencies using a fiscal sponsor, see Fiscal Sponsorship section); and
6. **A list of your board of directors and their principal affiliations** (e.g., full name, address, telephone number(s), employment and/or volunteer affiliation), with board meeting dates, times, and location.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please use paper that copies legibly and attach all materials using a paper clip. Do not enclose your concept letter in any sort of cover. Do not provide any materials other than those specifically requested at this time. This includes display materials, videotapes, audio cassettes, etc. Due to the volume of requests, materials not requested will not be reviewed or retained.

For agencies not currently recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit, attach a copy of the sponsoring organization’s Internal Revenue Service Letter of Determination. The sponsoring organization’s chief executive officer must also sign the concept letter fact sheet.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SUBMITTING YOUR CONCEPT LETTER

Staff will process the request and notify you on how to proceed. Possibilities include:

- Invitation to complete a formal application. A copy of the appropriate application form will be provided.
- A request for more information. A staff member will advise you of the needed information.
- Advise to not pursue funding at this time. A staff member will notify you.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND HELP FOR ELIGIBLE GRANTSEEKERS

Those grantseekers selected to complete a Community Foundation application will be provided with the appropriate grant application(s): Agency Support, Technology Support, and/or New Program/Project Support. The program staff will be available to provide guidance and answer your questions as requested.

GRANTSEEKERS WORKSHOP

Eligible grantseekers only are encouraged to attend an informal meeting designed to help with any remaining questions about completing the Community Foundation grant application(s). The eligible grantseekers’ workshop is noted on the yearly schedule. Attendance is not a requirement and is open only to those grantseekers selected to submit applications for the current funding quarter. Grantseekers may bring a draft of their application package to the workshop to ask specific questions or may get general advice as needed.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

CONFIDENTIALITY

Although the deliberations and discussions of the grant review committee are strictly confidential, the program staff will share information with other individuals and agencies as needed. To assist the grantseeker, the program staff may discuss general concerns and questions with the grantseeker.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

The Community Foundation maintains a strict conflict of interest policy for its board, staff, and grant review committee to ensure independence and integrity in its recommendations. Staff and grant review committee members may not accept any form of compensation, gifts, or favors from any organization or representative that anticipates submitting a grant proposal to the foundation, has submitted a proposal, or has received a grant. This includes the invitation to special events for the sole purpose of recognizing donors.

Paid staff members of the Community Foundation may serve on the board of nonprofit organizations. Those organizations, however, are disqualified from applying for or receiving an agency, technology, or new program/project support grant from the Community Grantmaking Fund, the Clarke Endowment Fund, or any named unrestricted fund of the Community Foundation. The staff of the foundation may not participate in fundraising feasibility studies.

FISCAL SPONSORSHIP

If your organization is not currently recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt nonprofit, you may identify another agency to act as your organization's fiscal sponsor. The fiscal sponsor must be recognized as a publicly supported, charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code.

A copy of the sponsoring organization's Internal Revenue Service Letter of Determination showing 501(c)(3) status must be included with your proposal, along with copies of the sponsor's most recent annual financial statements (audited if available). The sponsoring organization's chief executive officer must complete and sign the **fiscal Sponsor section at the bottom of the Concept Letter Fact Sheet**. *If a grant is approved, payment will be made to your organization through your fiscal sponsor.*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ARE THERE ANY UNIQUE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION INITIATIVES?

Depending on the grant funds available, and in response to community needs identified by the Community Foundation, it may, at times, award multi-year and/or larger grant amounts than those listed on the previous page. This may occur in rare instances and only through the initiation of the Community Foundation. All grantseekers are advised to follow the timetable guidelines and limitations listed on grant calendar.

WHAT ARE THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS IF I RECEIVE A GRANT?

The Community Foundation is interested in the impact of its grantmaking to area nonprofit organizations and the community. Recognizing the importance of effective evaluation, grant evaluation should augment your organization's ongoing planning and evaluation process. Full financial accounting of the expenditure of grant funds and narrative reports on the grant-supported projects are required as a condition of the grant.

If the program lasts for more than six months, interim or progress reports should be submitted. They may be brief but should include a financial summary, indicating how foundation funds have been expended during the period, and a narrative comment on development of the program or project.

A final report is required within 60 days after the end of the grant period. This report should include a complete financial statement showing all funds received and expended for the programs covered by the grant, and a narrative report on the project and its significance and success. The financial and narrative reports should, in each case, compare actual expenditures and accomplishments with the budget and objectives cited in the original proposal. Failure to submit the report by the specified date could result in a loss of future grant dollars.

HOW DOES THE GRANT PROCESS WORK?

Upon receipt of completed applications, requests go through a competitive grant review process. As a steward of community dollars, the Community Foundation requires thorough evaluations of all requests received. The evaluation process may include requests for additional information, site visits, third-party interviews, and other steps as deemed appropriate. Final decisions on all grant requests rest with the board of directors on the advice of grant review committee recommendations.

WHEN WILL I FIND OUT IF MY ORGANIZATION HAS RECEIVED A GRANT?

Due to the volume of requests, program staff will not call to inform grantseekers of funding decisions. **Grantseekers are invited and welcome to call the program staff to discuss the agency's funding status on or after the dates listed in the Grantmaking Schedule.** The agencies will also be notified in writing as indicated in the Grantmaking Schedule.

WHO CAN I TALK TO AT THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION ABOUT GRANTS?

As part of its mission, the Community Foundation strives to serve as a community leader and convener to help create a brighter future for the residents of Allen County. We welcome opportunities for our board and staff to learn more about the needs of the community.

At the same time, please keep in mind that the Community Foundation strives to maintain a fair and equitable grant application process, equally open to a broad range of charitable interests. The only method to apply for funding from the Community Foundation is through the application process described in this document, and only information included in this process will be used by our volunteers in their funding decisions.

As outlined in Community Foundation policies and procedures, staff and volunteers must report all conflicts of interest and abstain from funding deliberations accordingly.

We understand that you may, from time to time, have questions about the application process. We ask that you direct those questions to the Senior Program Officer, Christine Meek at 260-426-4083, or via e-mail at cmeek@cfgfw.org.