



Collaborative Efforts / Strategic Restructuring Fund Guidelines and Procedures

The Community Foundation believes that these difficult economic times call for alternative approaches to growing and stabilizing area nonprofits. These alternatives should not be considered a last ditch effort for survival but rather an innovative strategic tool for organizations focused on providing quality, cost effective services to their constituents.

The Community Foundation realizes that strategic restructuring is not a one size fits all solution, rather it is a broad continuum of possible models including, but not limited to, joint ventures, informal partnerships, administrative or back office consolidations, joint programming, parent-subsidiary structures, fiscal sponsorships, and mergers. All of these models may require a fundamental change in individual organizational structure.

Support from this fund does not endorse any one model but is intended to assist with the opportunity to explore which model, if any, works best for each organization.

Eligibility

Qualifying organizations must meet Community Foundation basic eligibility guidelines: federal tax-exempt status as a section 501(c)(3) public charity and must serve the Allen County area.

Receiving a grant from the Collaborative Efforts / Strategic Restructuring Fund will not affect an organization's funding eligibility for other funds held at the Community Foundation.

Applications will be reviewed on an on-going basis. Financial support will be awarded based on a competitive review of the applications. The Community Foundation particularly encourages applications from organizations that:

- are in transition (e.g., significant growth, changes in staff or board leadership, reorganization, reduction in funding or other similar circumstances); and
- are providing the same or similar services as other local organizations.

Application Process

Step 1: Contact Christine Meek at the Community Foundation, 260-426-4083, to briefly describe your collaborative effort/strategic restructuring initiative and discuss its general eligibility for grant consideration. Applicants are expected to have spoken with consultants and have a fairly well-defined scope of work for the project before submitting an application.

Step 2: If you conclude that you are eligible to apply, form or designate a specific committee of staff and board leaders who will plan and participate in the strategic restructuring initiative. Begin the selection process for engaging the appropriate consultant. It is recommended that you interview at least two consultants.

Step 3: Submit a brief proposal to the Community Foundation (not to exceed 4 pages) containing the following information, in this order:

- **Cover Letter** (one page only) briefly summarizing the funding request. The letter should be signed by both the executive director and the board chair. If this is a joint application, both executive directors and board chairs should sign. Indicate which organization will manage the grant funds.
- In an attached narrative, please address the following in this order:

Organizational context

- Briefly describe the organizations interested in participating in the collaborative efforts/strategic restructuring process.
- What events or circumstances motivated you to consider this collaborative effort/strategic restructuring?
- Describe any complementary activities (e.g., strategic planning or earlier work with consultants) that the organizations have already undertaken relevant to the proposed project.

Organizational leadership

- Describe board and staff roles within the scope of this project.
- Who is providing leadership for this project?
- Describe your communications plan to keep the full board, staff, and constituents informed of project.

Initiative work plan

- What is the desired change or impact you hope to achieve by this project?
- How does this change or impact relate to your short term and long term goals?
- If your organization is planning to utilize the services of a consultant, please submit the resumes/proposals of the two firms you are considering. Which firm have you chosen and why?

Step 4: Checklist of required documents (not included in the four page proposal limit). If this is a joint application, both agencies are required to submit the documentation listed below.

- Current board list, including principal affiliations (e.g., name, address, telephone number(s), employment and/or volunteer affiliation), and board meeting dates, times, and location.
- Copy of the section from the board minutes that outlines the discussion about strategic restructuring and indicates the board's full support to address the issue.
- The proposed work plan, timeline, and budget provided by the consultant for the project.
- Organization's current operating budget, showing revenue and expenses.
- Most recent audited financial statement.

Step 5: Proposal Review – After reviewing the information submitted Community Foundation staff may contact you to solicit additional information or arrange a meeting to discuss the request. A sub-committee of the Community Foundation Board of Directors will review the request and a funding decision will be made within 30 days of submitting the proposal.

Step 6: Project Evaluation – Each grantee will be asked to provide an interim report after six months and a final self-evaluation at the end of the initiative. Additionally, Community Foundation staff may request a meeting to review and discuss ongoing activities related to the proposal.

Proposal Review Criteria

Grant funds are limited. Funding decisions for collaborative efforts/strategic restructuring will be influenced by whether:

- The proposed initiative has strong board and staff buy-in and participation.
- The proposal clearly identifies current organizational conditions and the organizational change that is sought.
- The proposal is clear and compelling in its description of how the initiative will lead to stronger overall organizational impact.