



Guidelines for Grantseekers

These guidelines are also found online at www.community-foundation.com

OUR MISSION

The Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation is dedicated to improving the quality of life in the Hancock County area through collaborative leadership, responsible grantmaking and the development of philanthropic giving.

INTRODUCTION

The Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation is a nonprofit, publicly-supported, philanthropic institution that manages a pool of charitable funds whose income is used to benefit Findlay and Hancock County through grants to nonprofit organizations, educational programs, and scholarships. Some funds are restricted by their donors for specific purposes or agencies, while others are unrestricted. Other funds are donor-advised and are not part of the competitive grant cycle. However, together these funds reflect the diverse charitable interests of our community and enable us to respond to a wide variety of organizations and programs.

While our history as a community foundation is relatively new, the grantmaking responsibilities of community assets have continued for more than 30 years. The Dorney Fund, established as a trust of the Cleveland Foundation by L. Dale Dorney, has served as a model of grantmaking and philanthropic giving in our community since 1976. The Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation was established in 1992 as an outgrowth of the L. Dale Dorney Fund, and in February 1999 became independent from the Cleveland Foundation.

The information in this packet is designed to provide information about applying for a 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. Please contact our office with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Katherine Kreuchauf, CFRE
President

GUIDELINES FOR GRANTSEEKERS

There is no prescription to ensure success in obtaining a grant. Each proposal is evaluated on the basis of 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 in order 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 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 located in the Greater Hancock County area or will directly benefit the Greater Hancock County residents, unless stipulated by the donor. Many grantseekers find it beneficial to call The Community Foundation office at 419-425-1100 for an appointment to discuss their ideas with program staff before beginning the grant proposal.

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 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.

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 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) years. A semi-annual report including a budget update and narrative must be submitted to our office every six months (forms are available on our website).

LETTER OF INTENT

All potential grant applicants are required to submit a LETTER OF INTENT no less than sixty (60) days prior to the grant application deadline. The information provided is for staff review only and will not be used in the final grant review. 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 no less than 45 days prior to the grant application deadline to request submission of a full grant application.

Please include the following information in Letter of Intent:

- Name of APPLICANT ORGANIZATION.
- Name, address, telephone number, and email of CONTACT PERSON. (The contact person is the person who should be contacted with any questions regarding the project and the grant proposal.)
- APPLICATION DEADLINE at which final proposal will be submitted.
- PROJECT TITLE.
- PROJECT DATES.
- ESTIMATED GRANT REQUEST.
- Estimated total PROJECT COST.
- A BRIEF DESCRIPTION of the project.

PREPARING THE GRANT NARRATIVE

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?

Your proposal should cover the following important areas of information. Please include any of the following elements that relate to your particular project.

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
- Why your plan is cost-effective
- The activities you propose to address the problem

- Why your organization is best-positioned to do the work
- Expected immediate and long-term results/goals/objectives/outcomes
- 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 program
- Professional support or other evidence on the project's value

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

4. Project Continuation

- If the project is ongoing, your plans to continue after the funding period
- Future funding sources
- Other current funding sources

5. Project Evaluation

- Your criteria for effectiveness
- Methods and schedule for measuring results/objectives/outcomes
- Methods and schedule for short and long-term evaluation of results/objectives/outcomes
- Who will assess the results/objectives/outcomes
- What changes will occur in the community or to the targeted population as a result of the program
- Submit progress reports at six month and year end intervals

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Required forms can be accessed through The Community Foundation website at www.community-foundation.com in the grants section.

- Complete the GRANT BUDGET FORM.
- Complete the GRANT BUDGET NARRATIVE FORM.
- Submit a copy of your audited financial statements, or if not available, a copy of the latest 990 informational return. Financial statements must include a balance sheet and a statement of income and expenses for the entire organization.
- Submit a copy of your organization's current annual operating budget. Please note any deficit and describe your plans to correct it.

It is important to demonstrate your organization's ability to obtain additional funding.

FULL GRANT APPLICATION FINAL CHECKLIST

Please submit your proposal on 8½x 11” paper printed on one side only. Be sure to use the required GRANT COVER SHEET form, GRANT BUDGET form, and GRANT BUDGET NARRATIVE form available at The Community Foundation office and online at www.community-foundation.com under the grants section. The forms are in Microsoft Word and can be saved to your computer.

In one large envelope, please submit the following documents:

- GRANT COVER SHEET signed by your agency director
- GRANT BUDGET
- GRANT BUDGET NARRATIVE
- a one or two-page GRANT SUMMARY
- your full GRANT NARRATIVE, with the pages numbered
- a copy of your organization’s TAX-EXEMPT LETTER from the IRS
- your current ANNUAL REPORT or a brief statement of your agency’s most recent activities
- a LIST OF CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS including their business and volunteer affiliations
- your current AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT of your operating budget or a copy of the organization’s latest 990 information.
- your agency’s AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY or statement of non-discrimination
- JOB DESCRIPTIONS and RÉSUMÉS of your project personnel and résumés of any consultants
- names of PROJECT COLLABORATORS, if applicable
- LETTERS IN SUPPORT of your project or letters from other funding sources who may have expressed interest in supporting the project

AFTER YOU SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL

A program officer will meet with you to discuss the project as part of the proposal review. The program staff may conduct research, make site visits, interview your staff or board, and talk to other experts in the field. During this time, program staff may also suggest ways to redefine your proposal.

Program staff prepares a written evaluation of your proposal that is reviewed by The Community Foundation’s Board of Trustees. The Board will decide to fund (in full or in part), decline, or defer the proposal.

WHEN A GRANT IS AWARDED

Within two weeks of the Board of Trustees meeting, you will receive notification of the decision. If your proposal is funded, a Terms of Grant Agreement will be sent for your signature. The Terms of Grant

Agreement is the governing document for The Community Foundation funding; it outlines the limits and conditions under which the grant has been authorized. It also includes a payment schedule; The Community Foundation will disburse funds over the period of the grant.

Progress reports will be required at six month and year-end intervals, particularly for projects of long duration. Please contact staff to discuss any anticipated changes in project activities or uses of funds. All changes must first be approved by The Community Foundation President.

AFTER THE GRANT PERIOD EXPIRES

A final narrative and fiscal report on all projects funded is required. These forms are available online at www.community-foundation.com and can be downloaded to your computer. The fiscal report must cover the entire project period and be signed by your organization’s fiscal officer or treasurer. 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. Written requests for extensions may be sent to The Community Foundation office.

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

PLEASE MAIL OR DELIVER TWO COPIES OF THE PROPOSAL AND ATTACHMENTS TO:

The Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation
101 West Sandusky Street, Suite 207
Findlay, OH 45840
Ph. 419-425-1100

For more information about The Community Foundation please write, call, or visit our office.
You can also visit our website at www.community-foundation.com.