Grant Guidelines

WINNESHIEK COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
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WINNESHIEK COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANTS – 2027

IMPORTANT DATES		
APPLICATION OPENS	**NOVEMBER 15, 2026**	This document provides the necessary details about this specific grant opportunity, including deadlines and eligibility requirements. For information about accessing the online grants management site, tips on grantwriting, and more, visit the Nonprofit FAQ section of our website (www.cfneia.org). If you have any additional questions, please contact our administrative office at 319-243-1358 or programs@cfneia.org.
APPLICATION DEADLINE	**JANUARY 15, 2027 AT 5:00 PM**	

Zoom Drop-In: Grant Assistance Office Hours **https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81066591446**

Wednesday, November 18, 2026 – 9-10:00am
Wednesday, November 25, 2026 – 3-4:00pm
Friday, December 4, 2026 – 9-10:00am
Thursday, December 10, 2026 - 12-1:00pm
Wednesday, December 16, 2026 - 3-4:00pm
Wednesday, December 30, 2026 - 9-10:00am
Tuesday, January 5, 2027 – 12-1:00pm
Monday, January 11, 2027 – 11:00am-12:00pm
Thursday, January 14, 2027 – 9-10:00am

About the Winneshiek County Community Foundation

The Winneshiek County Community Foundation is an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa, created by and for the people of Winneshiek County, for the purpose of generating both endowed and unrestricted funds to support charitable projects, activities, programs, and organizations that will improve the quality of life for the residents of Winneshiek County, Iowa. Visit www.winneshiekccf.org to learn more.

What We Support

The Winneshiek County Community Foundation provides grants to improve life in Winneshiek County, Iowa. We want to help develop communities that people want to live in, as well as benefit rural areas of the county. We do this through the Community Foundation's Impact Priority areas of grantmaking. For more information on our Impact Priorities, visit cfneia.org/impactpriorities.

Our Impact Priorities

- Opportunity & Access
- Health & Safety
- Vibrant Communities
- Youth Empowerment

How Our Impact Priorities Guide Us

Our Impact Priorities guide where and how we invest in our communities. They help focus our grantmaking on projects that build opportunity, strengthen community connections, and create long-term impact. We encourage applicants to consider how their work aligns with these priorities.

Opportunity & Access

Everyone deserves the chance to reach their potential. We partner with organizations to remove barriers and expand pathways to opportunity so all people, especially those in underserved and rural areas, have equitable access to the resources and support needed to thrive.

We welcome proposals that expand access to opportunity and strengthen economic stability for Winneshiek County residents. We have particular interest in efforts that strengthen workforce readiness, including those that build skills, reduce barriers to employment, and help individuals successfully enter or remain in the workforce, while also considering other efforts that expand access to opportunity.

Health & Safety

Every person has the right to live in a safe, stable, and healthy environment. We partner with organizations providing essential health and human services that promote wellbeing and help residents meet their basic needs.

We welcome proposals that demonstrate a meaningful community need and measurable outcomes related to improving the health, safety, and well-being of Winneshiek County residents. We have particular interest in efforts that address food insecurity and strengthen public safety, while also considering other significant health and safety needs within our county.

Vibrant Communities

Vibrant Communities are places where people want to live, work, and play. We connect and collaborate with organizations that bring neighborhoods and communities to life through arts, culture, recreation, placemaking, and economic development.

We welcome proposals that strengthen quality of life and community vitality in Winneshiek County. We have particular interest in efforts that enhance recreation amenities and spaces and support thoughtful community planning, while also considering other projects that contribute to vibrant, connected, and welcoming communities.

Youth Empowerment

Young people deserve opportunities to learn, grow, and reach their full potential. We support organizations that invest in children and youth through education, mentorship, leadership development, and experiences that help them thrive.

We welcome proposals that demonstrate meaningful outcomes for children, youth, and families in Winneshiek County. We have particular interest in efforts that increase access to affordable, quality, and sustainable childcare, while also considering other programs and services that support the healthy development and well-being of children and youth.

Eligibility to Apply

Organizations must provide benefits to the people of Winneshiek County *and* must meet the following criteria to apply for a grant:

- Classified as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization or be a government entity.
- Tax-exempt organizations classified as *other* than 501(c)(3) are also eligible *if* the project is deemed charitable; please contact our office to discuss the project's eligibility prior to submitting a proposal.
- Current with all state and federal reporting requirements, such as filing of 990 forms.
- No past due grant reports for previously awarded grants.
- Requests that include or require participation in inherently religious activities such as religious worship, instruction, or proselytization or activities that promote specific religious doctrine are not eligible.
- Application must be completed by the due date using the online application and CFNEIA grant site.
- Requests for political activity/lobbying, debt repayment, endowment contributions, funds that will be re-granted by the applicant to another entity, and/or expenses incurred prior to grant notifications are not eligible.
- Fiscal sponsors may submit only one application per sponsored organization.

Groups, projects, or initiatives that do not meet the above eligibility requirements may submit a request through a fiscal sponsor. Fiscal sponsors must be classified as a 501(c)(3) or a government entity. The Foundation prefers that the fiscal sponsor's mission closely align with the sponsored project. Fiscal Sponsors will be legally and financially responsible for any grant funds that are awarded.

NOTE: Please read the guidelines and application instructions thoroughly before submitting the application.

Restrictions

In addition to the eligibility requirements, the following restrictions apply:

- One application per organization with the exemption of Government Entities and Fiscal Sponsors. Government entities and schools may submit only one application per department.
- Grant request minimum is $3,000; maximum grant request amount is $15,000.
- **Applicants must use the Budget Template that is linked to the application (see page 4 for example).** Complete budget details and notation of other funding sources secured or pending approval are required. ***The CF Request plus Other Funding column must equal the Total Request Cost column.***
- Use of local vendors for your supplies and services is encouraged, if applicable and feasible.
- Applicants must include bids/estimates for any work being completed and/or equipment/materials to be purchased that are more than 5% of the total costs or more than $50.

Review Criteria

The WCCF is focused on providing grants that create an impact within Winneshiek County. Applications will be reviewed and scored on the following criteria:

Impact Priority Criteria — Reviewers will evaluate the strength of the proposed work within the selected Impact Priority, with particular consideration given to Winneshiek County's identified areas of interest:

- **Priority Advancement** — To what extent does the request advance the selected Impact Priority, with particular consideration given to Winneshiek County's identified areas of interest?
- **Community Need & Opportunity** — Does the application demonstrate a meaningful need, challenge, barrier, opportunity, or aspiration in Winneshiek County and clearly identify who is affected or benefits?
- **Approach & Strategy** — Does the organization present a clear and appropriate approach for addressing the identified need or opportunity?
- **Outcomes & Impact** — Is the proposed work likely to produce meaningful benefits or change for the people or community served?

Core Criteria — Reviewers will also evaluate all applications using the following consistent criteria:

- **Collaboration** — Does the organization use partnerships appropriately to support or strengthen the proposed work?
- **Learning & Improvement** — Does the organization meaningfully learn from its work, listen to those it serves, and use what it learns to adapt or improve?
- **Budget** — Is the budget clear, credible, and appropriately aligned with the proposed work?
- **Confidence in Investment** — Does the application provide confidence that the organization has the capacity and readiness to carry out the proposed work and responsibly steward Foundation resources?

Grant Selection Committee

The Winneshiek County Community Foundation Committee is made up of community volunteers from throughout Winneshiek County. This committee is responsible for making funding recommendations to the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa's board of directors. The Committee carefully reviews and considers all eligible applications based on the guidelines stated herein. The Committee list can be found at www.winneshiekccf.org

How to Apply

Before applying, applicants should review these grant guidelines to ensure they meet all eligibility requirements. Applications must be submitted through the Foundation's online grant management system. Visit https://www.cfneia.org/nonprofits/grant-opportunities/ to access the online grant system and additional resources for grant seekers.

Important Dates

- **A grant workshop will be held November 16, 2027, at 5:30-7pm at the Decorah Bank & Trust Learning Center** (202 E Water St, Decorah). You can RSVP for this workshop by using this **link**.
- **The grant application submission deadline is 5:00 pm on January 15, 2027.** Technical assistance for applicants will be available until 5:00 pm on the day of the deadline.
- All applicants will be notified of the results of the grant process in early-mid March 2027.
- Grant award ceremony will be held on March 25, 2027. More details will be provided with the notification letter. ***Grantees (along with staff & board members) are strongly encouraged to attend this ceremony to be recognized.***
- Grant Reports, for successful proposals, will be due April 30, 2028.

Questions

Applicants should contact Shanda Hansen, Director of Affiliate Impact, at 319-243-1357 or shansen@cfneia.org to explore the appropriateness of requests and for any further guidance. First-time applicants are highly encouraged to contact Shanda for guidance to strengthen their alignment and application.

Applicants can contact Dotti Thompson, Grant and Scholarship Manager, at 319-243-1358 or dthompson@cfneia.org with specific questions on eligibility or accessing the grant site.

Application Checklist:

____ Guidelines Reviewed

____ Eligibility Verified or Fiscal Sponsor Secured

____ Budget Complete using Required Template

____ Request Bids & Other Support Documents Uploaded, if applicable

____ Required Signatures Completed

____ Application Submitted Online by **5:00 pm** on 1/15/2027

Sample CF Request Budget					
	Request: Food Pantry				
Line-Item Expenses	**Total Request Cost**	**CF Request**	**Other Funding Amt**	**Other Funding Source**	**Other Funding Status**
Meat Purchases	$ 5,000.00	$ 2,500.00	$ 2,500.00	Donations	Received
Food Bank Purchases	$ 3,000.00	$ 1,000.00	$ 2,000.00	Agency	Received
Non-Food Purchases	$ 7,000.00	$ 2,000.00	$ 2,000.00	Donations	Secured
			$ 2,000.00	Agency	Received
			$ 1,000.00	In-Kind	Pending
Utilities	$ 2,400.00	$ 500.00	$ 900.00	Agency	Received
			$ 1,000.00	Grant	Pending
Rent on Building	$ 4,000.00	$ 500.00	$ 1,500.00	Agency	Received
			$ 1,000.00	Grant	Secured
			$ 1,000.00	In-Kind	Secured
Mileage - P/U Food	$ 1,500.00		$ 1,500.00	Donations	Secured
Wages for Staff	$ 6,000.00		$ 3,000.00	Agency	Received
			$ 3,000.00	Grant	Secured
Total	**$ 28,900.00**	**$ 6,500.00**	**$ 22,400.00**		

Instructions:

Enter each expense line item for the project in the Line-Item Expenses column (Column A). In the Total Request Cost column, enter the total cost for the corresponding line item (Column B). The cost of the line item that is being requested from the CF is entered into the CF Request column (Column C). Any additional funding amounts for each request expense are entered separately by funding source (Column D). Enter the appropriate funding status for each funding source in the Funding Status column (Column F). You may add more rows as needed. **The Total Request Cost column must equal the CF Request column plus the Other Funding Source Column.**

Other Funding Source Definitions:

Agency - Funds from the organization's budget or reserves
In-Kind Services - Labor or other services provided at no cost or by volunteers
Grant - Grant funds for this request other than those from the CF, including grants pending/received from other CFNEIA Affiliates
Donations - Funds received from private individuals or businesses
United Way - Funds received through United Way organizations
Other - Funds from a source not listed

Other Funding Status Definitions:

Pending - Funds have been sought, but are awaiting approval/denial
Secured - Funds have been committed but not received by the organization
Received - Funds have been received and are earmarked for the request