

Partners in Community Impact

Supporting organizations creating stronger communities for everyone.

Grant Guidelines

BENTON COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANTS - 2025

SNAPSHOT		
APPLICATION OPENS	SEPTEMBER 1, 2025	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 grant writing, and more, visit the FAQs section of our website (www.cfneia.org). If you have any additional questions, please contact Director of Affiliate Impact Shanda Hansen at 319-243-1357 or shansen@cfneia.org
APPLICATION DEADLINE	OCTOBER 15, 2025 at 5:00pm	

About the Benton County Community Foundation

The Benton County Community Foundation, an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created by and for the people of Benton County. The Foundation's mission is to strengthen Benton County by encouraging charitable giving to create legacies for the future. We offer world-class donor services and wise investment. Our grants are designed to act as a catalyst for community transformation and growth, enriching the lives of area citizens.

What We Fund

The Benton County Community Foundation provides grants to improve life in Benton County, Iowa. We want to help develop communities that people want to live in, as well as to benefit rural areas of the county. Areas of Foundation giving are:



Arts
& Culture



Community
Betterment



Education
& Youth
Development



Environment
& Animal
Welfare



Health



Human
Service

Eligibility to Apply for Funding

Organizations must provide benefits to the people of the Benton 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 previous Benton County Community Foundation 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.

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; however, fiscal sponsors may submit only one application per sponsored organization.**
- Government entities may submit only one application per department. Schools are considered government entities for grant purposes.
- Minimum grant request: \$5,000.
- Applicants must use the Budget Template that is linked to the application; those that do not include the required Budget Template will be disqualified (see page 4 for a sample budget).
- Bids/estimates for work to be completed or equipment/materials to be purchased should be attached in the Support Document section of the application.
- Requests for building projects and/or veterans' needs from veterans' organizations are eligible ***if the project benefits the whole community.***
- Requests for veterans' memorials are not eligible.
- Requests for funding of city welcome signs and wayfinding signs are not eligible for funding.
- Requests for pass-through funds or funds that will be regranted by the applicant are not eligible.

Funding Priorities

Highest priority for funding is given to projects that:

- Address a community need, demonstrate broad-based community support, and provide benefits that are community/county wide.
- Show a high level of support or leveraged funding from other sources. For government entities, requests with committed funds from the city/county for the project are given higher priority.
- Maximize community resources through cooperation and collaboration with other organizations in the community and work to eliminate redundant services, programs, or projects.
- Show long-term sustainability of the project without annual grant support from the BCCF.

Review Criteria

Applications will be reviewed and scored on the following elements:

- **Organization** – The overall health of the organization and how the application reflects the organization's capability for completing the project.
- **Feasibility** – The probability the project will be successful, including the organization's level of staff/volunteers and collaboration with community partners.
- **Community Need and Outcomes** – The need for the project and how the proposed outcomes impact the community/county.
- **Project Budget** – The details of the budget and the ability to secure and/or leverage other funding sources, including in-kind services. ***Requests that do not show other funding sources are scored at zero for the budget portion of the application.***

Grant Selection Process

The Benton County Community Foundation is made up of community volunteers from throughout Benton 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 2025 Governing Committee is:

Teresa Cretin	Jacki McDermott	Phil Shaff
Jean Fish	Manda McKinley	Christine Turner
Mindy Fisher	Brian McNulty	Dusti Winkie
Kassie Mather		

How to Apply

Applicants interested in seeking grants from the Benton County Community Foundation should fully review these grant guidelines prior to applying to ensure all eligibility requirements are met. Applications must be submitted through the foundation's online grant management system. Visit www.bentonccf.org to access the online grant system, and to find additional resources for grant seekers.

Important Dates

- **There will be a grant workshop held in September.** Details will be provided in an email sent to nonprofits & government entities who have applied in the past. If you are a new applicant, you can contact our office for details.
- **The grant application deadline is 5:00 pm on October 15, 2025. Technical support will be available to applicants until 5:00 pm on the day of the deadline.**
- All applicants will be notified of the results of the grant decisions in mid-December 2025.
- Grant awards will be presented at an award ceremony in early-mid January 2026.
- Grant reports, for successful proposals, will be due on January 31, 2027.

Grant Conditions

Awarded applicants are required to:

- Sign a Terms of Grant agreement which clarifies legal parameters for use of the grant.
- Submit a Grant Report to show the results of the project and to show that all the funds have been spent as intended. (If the project takes longer to complete, the Community Foundation will consider a request to extend the Grant Report deadline.)

Questions

Applicants, *especially first-time organizations*, 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.

Applicants should 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.

	Sample BCCF Project Budget				
	Project: Roof Repairs				
Project Items	Total Project Cost	CF Request	Other Funding Amt.	Other Funding Source	Funding Status
Roofing Shingles	6000.00	4500.00	1000.00	Agency Funds	Received
			500.00	Grant - Walmart	Pending
Roofing Supplies	5000.00	2500.00	1500.00	In-Kind-Menards	Secured
			1000.00	Donations	Received
Labor	4500.00	3000.00	1500.00	In-Kind- Volunteers	Secured
Total	\$ 15,500.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,500.00		

Instructions:

Enter each expense line item for the request in the Request Expenses column (Column A). In the Total Item 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 in the Other Funding column (Column E). Select the appropriate funding source for each other funding amount in the Funding Source column (Column F) from the drop-down menu. Select the appropriate funding status for each funding source in the Funding Status column (Column G) from the drop-down menu. **The Total Item Cost column must equal the CF Request Column plus the Other Funding Column. Definitions listed below are for the other funding amounts, not the CF request.**

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 this 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

Funding Status Definitions: This is for the other funding sources; not the requests from this CF

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