

Grant Guidelines



CERRO GORDO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION – 2026

IMPORTANT DATES		
APPLICATION OPENS	MARCH 1, 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	APRIL 15, 2026 AT 5:00 PM	
<u>Zoom Drop-In: Grant Assistance Office Hours – https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81066591446</u> Wednesday, March 4, 2026 – 9:00-10:00am Tuesday, March 31, 2026 – 12:00-1:00pm Thursday, March 12, 2026 – 12:00-1:00pm Monday, April 6, 2026 – 11:00am-12:00pm Wednesday, March 18, 2026 – 3:00-4:00pm Thursday, April 9, 2026 – 3:00-4:00pm Friday, March 27, 2026 – 9:00-10:00am Tuesday, April 14, 2026 – 1:00-2:00pm		

The Cerro Gordo County Community Foundation

The Cerro Gordo County Community Foundation is an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa, created by and for the people of Cerro Gordo 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 Cerro Gordo County, Iowa. Visit www.cerrogordoccf.org to learn more.

What We Support

The Cerro Gordo County Community Foundation provides grants to improve life in Cerro Gordo 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

Eligibility to Apply

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

- Be 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.
- Be current with all state and federal reporting requirements, such as filing of 990 forms.
- No past due grant reports for previous Cerro Gordo 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 aligns 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 also apply:

- 501(c)(3) nonprofits in good standing with the IRS must apply through their own tax ID#, not through a fiscal sponsor.
- The Cerro Gordo County Community Foundation does not fund recurring annual operational costs.
- The minimum request is \$5,000. *Requests under \$5,000 will not be considered.*
- **BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS**
 - **TEMPLATE:** Required. Linked to application. See page 4 for an example.
 - **EXPLANATION:** Explain how the numbers were determined. Such as descriptions for line items, justification for expenses related to the request/program/service, elaborations about any indirect costs, and detailed explanations for substantial costs.
- **INELIGIBLE REQUESTS**
 - Fundraising/One-time expenses for events/parties
 - Pass-through funding
 - Debt repayment
 - Banners/Temporary Signs/Website Updates
 - Advertising
 - Multi-Year Funding Requests

Review Criteria

Applications will be reviewed and scored on the following elements:

Community Impact: The need for the service, program, or request. Indicates a community priority, addresses a transformational change, or expands benefits for those living throughout the county. Demonstrates an effort to reduce redundant services, programs, or requests.

Budget: The details of the budget and budget narrative. It shows collaboration and cooperation with other local organizations. Shows evidence of committed funds from other sources.

Sustainability: Indication of long-term sustainability of the service, program, or request without annual funding support from CGCCF.

Funding Priorities

Overarching Priorities:

- Enrich the quality of life for residents living in Cerro Gordo County.
- Indicates a long-term, transformational change that enhances, improves, and/or redesigns a system, process, or organization within the county.
- Expand access to beneficial resources for residents throughout the county.
- Demonstrate equity and inclusiveness for all county residents.

Highest Priority will be given to programs and requests that:

- Show collaboration and cooperation with local organizations and effort to eliminate redundant services, programs, or requests.
- Show evidence of committed funds from other sources in budget and budget narrative.
- Indicate long-term sustainability of the service, program, or request without annual funding support from CGCCF.

Grant Selection Process

The Cerro Gordo County Community Foundation is made up of volunteers from throughout Cerro Gordo 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.cerrogordoccf.org.

How to Apply

Applicants interested in seeking grants 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 <https://www.cfneia.org/nonprofits/grant-opportunities/> to access the online grant system and to find additional resources for grant seekers.

Important Dates

- Grant workshops will be held March 17, 2026, 11:00am-12:30pm - Rockwell Community Center, 208 27th St, Rockwell, and 2-3:30pm - Chamber of Commerce Community Room, 9 N. Federal Ave, Mason City.
- The grant application deadline is **5:00 pm on April 15, 2026**. Staff 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 process in mid-June 2026.
- Grant awards will be presented in July 2026. More details will be provided in notification letters. Grantees are encouraged to bring staff, board, and volunteers to this celebration event. *Fiscal Sponsors are responsible for notifying the sponsored agencies about the application and grant decisions.*
- Grant reports for successful proposals are due July 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 request and to show that all the funds have been spent as intended. (If the request takes longer to complete, the Community Foundation will consider a request to extend the Grant Report deadline.)

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.

SAMPLE Request Budget					
	Request Name:	Daycare Program Updates			
Request Expenses	Total Request Cost	CF Request	Other Funding Amt	Other Funding Source	Other Funding Status
iPads	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 1,000.00	Agency	Received
			\$ 500.00	Donations	Secured
Learning Centers	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 500.00	Donations	Pending
			\$ 500.00	Agency	Received
STEAM Materials	\$ 2,800.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 750.00	United Way	Pending
			\$ 500.00	Agency	Received
			\$ 50.00	In-Kind	Secured
Field Trips	\$ 600.00		\$ 300.00	In-Kind	Secured
			\$ 300.00	Grant	Secured
Total	\$ 10,900.00	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 4,400.00		

Budget Explanation

(Sample):

We have secured donations through several fundraisers and parents who support upgrading our equipment. The in-kind funding for the STEAM Materials includes a discount we are receiving from the vendor we are purchasing the materials from and the in-kind funding for the field trips includes the bus driver donating her time and the venue waving the fee for our attendance. We received a grant through the Target Corporation for the other costs of the field trip. We will hear about the United Way application by May 30, 2025, and are holding another fundraiser at the beginning of summer to raise the remaining \$500 towards the learning centers; we will also accept direct purchase through our vendor for parents or other donors who want to support us in that way.

Template Instructions:

Enter each expense line item for the request in the Request 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.**

NOTE: In-kind services or discounts should be included in the Total Request Cost column at a rate your organization would have to pay a vendor and the amount equal to this should be shown in the Other Funding Amt column as an income.

Source Definitions:

Agency - Funds from the organization's budget or reserves

In-Kind Services - Labor or services provided at discount or at no cost/by volunteers

Grant - Grant funds for this request other than those from this CF, including grants 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

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