

Grant Guidelines



EMMET COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANTS – 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	
Zoom Drop-In: Grant Assistance Office Hours – https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81066591446		
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 Emmet County Community Foundation

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

What We Support

The Emmet County Community Foundation provides grants to improve life in Emmet 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



Eligibility to Apply

Organizations must provide benefits to the people of Emmet 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 Emmet 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:

- One application per organization with the exemption of Government Entities and Fiscal Sponsors. Fiscal sponsors may submit only one application per sponsored organization.
- Government entities may submit only one application per department. Schools are government entities.
- **Grant request *minimum* is \$3,000; *maximum* is \$20,000.** The ECCF may decide to fund only a portion of the requested amount.
- The following organizations are eligible for specific requests only:
 - Churches – for requests that provide community services/activities
 - Economic development organizations - for marketing/education requests that benefit the whole community, not just member businesses
 - Service clubs and veterans' organization (with eligible tax-exempt status) - for charitable community requests
- Applicants **must** use the Budget Template that is linked to the application (see page 4 for sample budget).
- Bids and estimates should be uploaded into the Support Document section, not as the request budget.
- Requests requesting operating and salary expenses will be given low priority.
- **Requests should include documentation of partnerships with organizations/key players that will assist in making the request successful.**

Overarching Priorities

The Community Foundation has established the following as priorities for funding:

- Requests that address transformational change at the community/county level. *Transformational is defined as long-term, effective change that enhances, improves, and/or redesigns a system, process, or organization.*
- Requests that broaden offerings and encourage new experiences.
- Requests that enrich the quality of life for residents throughout Emmet County.
- Requests that show partnerships with other community organizations and key players to make an impact.

Review Criteria

Applications will be reviewed and scored on the following elements:

- **Organization and Collaboration** – The overall health of the organization and how the application reflects the organization’s capability for completing the request. The level of community partners that will assist with the completion of the request. Organizations with offices outside of Emmet County should show how the request will benefit county residents.
- **Feasibility** – The probability the request will be successful, including the organization’s level of staff/volunteers and collaboration with community partners. High Priority is given to volunteer requests.
- **Community Need and Outcomes** – The need for the request and how the proposed outcomes impact the community/county. High priority will be given to requests that maximize community resources through cooperation and collaboration with other organizations in the community and work to eliminate redundant services, programs, or requests.
- **Request Budget** – The details of the budget and the ability to secure and/or leverage other funding sources, including in-kind services. High priority will be given to requests that have matching funds from other sources.

Grant Selection Process

The Emmet County Community Foundation is made up of community volunteers from throughout Emmet 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.emmetccf.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

- A virtual grant workshop will be held February 26, 2026, at 7pm via Zoom. The recording will be available at www.emmetccf.org after the event.
- 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.
- 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:		Fire Department Updates			
Request Expenses	Total Request Cost	CF Request	Other Funding Amt	Other Funding Source	Other Funding Status
Packs	\$ 38,540.00	\$ 3,540.00	\$ 35,000.00	Agency	Received
Masks	\$ 6,116.00	\$ 1,900.00	\$ 4,216.00	Grant	Pending
Tanks	\$ 10,252.00	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 3,376.00	Donations	Secured
			\$ 3,376.00	United Way	Secured
Batteries	\$ 5,136.00	\$ 4,600.00	\$ 536.00	Other	Received
Chargers	\$ 1,616.00		\$ 1,616.00	In-Kind	Secured
Total	\$ 61,660.00	\$ 13,540.00	\$ 51,660.00		

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.

Funding Source Definitions:

Agency - Funds from the organization's budget or reserves

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

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

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