

Grant Guidelines



HOWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANTS – 2026

IMPORTANT DATES		
APPLICATION OPENS	SEPTEMBER 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	OCTOBER 15, 2026 AT 5:00 PM	
Zoom Drop-In: Grant Assistance Office Hours: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81066591446		
Wednesday, September 9, 2026 – 11:00am – 12:00pm		Tuesday, October 6, 2026 – 12:00-1:00pm
Tuesday, September 15, 2026 – 3:00-4:00pm		Thursday, October 8, 2026 – 3:00-4:00pm
Thursday, September 24, 2026 – 9:00-10:00am		Monday, October 12, 2026 – 11:00am-12:00pm
Tuesday, September 29, 2026 – 3:00-4:00pm		

About the Howard County Community Foundation

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

What We Fund

The Howard County Community Foundation provides grants to improve life in Howard 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 Howard 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 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.
- One application per project; two organizations cannot submit applications for the same project.
- **Minimum grant request is \$1,000. Maximum request is \$15,000.**
- General operating costs of salaries, wages, & travel are not eligible for funding. Operational costs of the actual project are eligible.
- Applicants **must** use the **NEW** budget template linked to the application. Budgets should indicate what other funding sources have been secured or are pending approval (See page 4 of Guidelines for sample).
- Estimates and invoices should be included in the Support Document section of the application, if applicable.
- The following organizations are eligible for specific projects only:
 - Churches – for projects that provide community services/activities.
 - Economic development organizations - for marketing/education projects that benefit the whole community, not just member businesses.
 - Service clubs and veterans' organizations (with eligible tax-exempt status) - for charitable community projects.

Funding Priorities

Highest priority for funding is given to requests that:

- Address a community need, demonstrates broad-based community support, and provides benefits that are community/county wide.
- Show support through in-kind services/volunteer labor or leveraged funding from other sources.
- 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.

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, without long-term financial support from the HCCF.
- **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.

Grant Selection Process

The Howard County Community Foundation is made up of community volunteers from throughout Howard 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.howardccf.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 on September 21, 2026 from 5:30-6:30pm at the Lime Springs Community Center (201 Center St., Lime Springs).** Please RSVP for the workshop using this [link](#).
- **The grant application deadline is 5:00 pm on October 15, 2026. 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 2026.
- Grant awards will be presented at an award ceremony in early-mid January 2027. **Grantees (along with staff & board members) are strongly encouraged to attend this ceremony to be recognized.**
- Grant reports for successful proposals will be due on January 31, 2028.

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 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.

	CF Request Budget				
	Request: Children's Programming				
Request Expenses	Total Request Cost	CF Request	Other Funding Amt.	Other Funding Source	Funding Status
Chairs for Area	1000.00	500.00	250.00	Agency Funds	Received
			250.00	Grant - Walmart	Pending
Children's Books	1500.00	500.00	500.00	Book Drive	Secured
			500.00	Private Donation	Received
Bookshelves	1500.00	750.00	750.00	In-Kind- Volunteers	Secured
Total	\$4,000.00	\$1,750.00	\$2,250.00		

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 into the Other Funding Amt. column (Column D). The type of funding source must be selected from the drop-down list in the Other Funding Source column (Column E). Select the appropriate funding status for each funding source in the Funding Status column (Column F) from the drop-down list. You may add more rows as needed. **The Total Project Cost column must equal the CF Request column plus the Other Funding Source Column.**

Funding Source Definitions:

Agency - Funds from the organization's budget or reserves

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

Grant - Grant funds (other than those from the HCCF), including 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:

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 this request