

Partners in Community Impact

Supporting organizations creating stronger communities for everyone.

Grant Guidelines

UPLIFT GRANTS – 2026

SNAPSHOT		
Application Opens	February 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 grant writing, and more, visit the Grantseeker Resources section of our website (www.cfneia.org). If you have any additional questions, please contact Sherita Jenkins at 319-243-1356 or sjenkins@cfneia.org .
Application Deadline	5:00pm on April 1, 2026	

What We Fund

The Community Foundation provides eligible agencies with one-year discretionary grants on a competitive basis to improve life for residents of Black Hawk County, Iowa. **Uplift Grant** requests can be for operations, programming, materials, equipment, and capital projects. Areas of support are in the following *specific* areas:

**Trees for
Waterloo**

**Chamber
Music**

**Opera
Music**

Grant Amounts

Grant proposal requests must be a minimum of \$5,000. Maximum request amounts for each specific area are as listed:

- Trees for Waterloo - \$18,236
- Chamber Music - \$7,390
- Opera Music - \$7,963

Due to the low number of applications anticipated for these specific areas, applicants are encouraged to request the maximum amount.

Eligibility to Apply

Organizations must provide benefits to the people of Black Hawk County **and** must meet the following criteria in order to apply for a grant:

- Be classified as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization or a government entity. Tax-exempt organizations classified as *other* than 501(c)(3) are also eligible *if and only 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.
- Must not have any past due grant reports for previous CFNEIA grants.

For groups, projects, or initiatives that do not meet the above eligibility requirements, the Community Foundation will consider projects submitted through a fiscal sponsor. Fiscal sponsors must be classified as a 501(c)(3) or a government entity. The Community Foundation prefers that the fiscal sponsor's mission closely aligns with the sponsored project.

It is suggested that organizations that are applying for the first time (or the first time in a number of years) contact Sherita Jenkins at 319-243-1356 or sjenkins@cfneia.org to explore the appropriateness of requests and for any further guidance.

How to Apply

Applicants interested in seeking grants from the Community Foundation should fully review these grant guidelines prior to starting an application to ensure all eligibility requirements are met. Applications must be submitted through the foundation's online grant management system, which can be located in the grants section of www.cfneia.org. Also located on the website are helpful resources for logging in and navigating the online grants system.

Funding Preferences and Priorities

Funding priorities are established by the field of interest funds financing these grants as outlined here:

- **Trees for Waterloo:** To support projects that support the beautification of the Waterloo downtown and residential areas, primarily to be used for street tree planting. *Supported by the Dick H. and Immy Young Family Fund and the Young-Magrid Fund.*
- **Chamber Music:** To support performances of classical chamber music in Black Hawk County. Chamber music is defined as performances of classical music composed for small groups of players. The groups could be sextets, quintets, quartets, trios with particular emphasis on string groups, although wood wind and brass groups are eligible as well as groups combining different types of instruments (including vocalists). Early music ensembles are also eligible. *Supported by the Howard V. Jones Chamber Music Fund.*
- **Opera Music:** To support the performance of classical opera music in Waterloo and Cedar Falls. Preference for professional artists over amateur or student productions. Grants may be made to solo recitals by professional classical music singers, who would be able to show that they have achieved a high reputation in the vocal world, including performances at the Metropolitan, Chicago Lyric and similar opera houses. Singers who have achieved a high reputation for solo recitals are also eligible. Performances require ensembles or full orchestras. *Supported by the Howard V. Jones Opera Fund.*

Restrictions and Application Frequency

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

- Requests should be for one year only.
- Requests should be a minimum of \$5,000.
- Applicants are limited to one application. Applicants may also submit one additional proposal as a fiscal sponsor.
- Organizations with a separate supporting, eligible organization (like a "friends of" or a foundation) can apply through either the organization or through its supporting organization, but not both. The Foundation encourages applications to be submitted through the supporting organization.
- The Foundation will not support requests for funds that are re-granted or redistributed by the applicant.
- Inherently religious activities such as religious worship, instruction, or proselytization or activities that promote specific religious doctrine are not eligible.
- Requests for partisan political or lobbying activities are not eligible.
- Operational requests from other foundations are not eligible.
- **Late, incomplete, or hard copy applications will not be considered.** Incomplete applications are those that are in DRAFT mode at the time of the application deadline.

Important Dates

- **The application deadline is 5:00pm on April 1, 2026.** Foundation staff will be on hand to provide technical assistance through 5:00pm on the day of the deadline. (To contact us, see **THE QUESTIONS** section below.)
- All applicants will be notified of the results of the grant decisions in mid-April.
- For funded proposals, a final report will be due on July 31, 2027.

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.)