

Grant Guidelines



WINNEBAGO COUNTY 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	
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 Winnebago County Community Foundation

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

What We Support

The Buchanan County Community Foundation provides grants to improve life in Buchanan 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 Buchanan 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 Buchanan 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 apply:

- One application per organization, exceptions may be made for government entities or Fiscal Sponsor organizations. 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 is \$1,000.
- Budget template linked to application **must** be used to submit request budget (see sample on page 4). Use the Budget Explanation section to provide details and clarification of request budget.
- Church requests that are for community-wide programs located in churches (such as food pantries, non-religious based daycares, senior citizen meals, etc.) may be considered for funding.
- As a general practice, the WCCF does not fund salaries or other general operating expenses.

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 request.
- **Feasibility** – The probability the request will be successful, including the organization's level of staff/volunteers and collaboration with community partners.
- **Community Need and Outcomes** – The need for the request and how the proposed outcomes impact the community/county.
- **Request Budget** – The details of the budget and the ability to secure and/or leverage other funding sources, including in-kind services.

Funding Priorities

The WCCF Committee places **high priority** on funding requests that:

- Address a community-based need, demonstrate broad community support, and benefit the whole community/county.
- Show the organization's ability to leverage funding and support from other sources, with budgets clearly showing all matching funds for the request.
- Maximize community resources through cooperation and collaboration with other organizations in the community and avoid replication of services, programs, or requests.
- Reflect organization and staff's capacity to achieve the desired results of the request.
- Show sustainability without additional long-term financial commitments from WCCF.

Grant Selection Process

The Winnebago County Community Foundation is made up of community volunteers from throughout Winnebago 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.winnebagooccf.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 grant workshop will be held March 2, 2026, at 5:30pm at the Lake Mills Community Center, 200 N 1st Ave., Lake Mills.
- 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.

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		\$ 35,000.00	Agency	Received
			\$ 3,540.00	Donations	Received
Masks	\$ 6,116.00	\$ 1,900.00	\$ 4,216.00	Grant	Pending
Tanks	\$ 10,252.00	\$ 6752.00	\$ 1,750.00	Donations	Secured
			\$ 1,750.00	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	\$ 13,252.00	\$ 48,408.00		

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 or remove 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 a discount, at no cost, or by volunteers
- Grant** - Grant funds for this request other than those from the WCCF, including grants from CFNEIA Affiliates
- Donations** - Funds received from private individuals or businesses
- United Way** - Funds received through United Way organizations
- Other** - Funds from sources 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