

Grant Guidelines



WINNESHIEK COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANTS – 2026

IMPORTANT DATES		
APPLICATION OPENS	NOVEMBER 15, 2025	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	JANUARY 15, 2026 AT 5:00 PM	
<u>Zoom Drop-In: Grant Assistance Office Hours</u>		
Thursday, December 4, 2025 – 11:00am-12:00pm		Thursday, January 8, 2026 – 2:00-3:00pm
Thursday, December 11, 2025 – 2:00pm-3:00pm		Tuesday, January 13, 2026 – 2:00-3:00pm
Thursday, December 18, 2025 – 10:00am-11:00am		Thursday, January 15, 2026 – 10:00-11:00am

About the Winneshiek County Community Foundation

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

What We Support

The Winneshiek County Community Foundation provides grants to improve life in Winneshiek 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 Winneshiek County *and* must meet the following criteria to apply:

- 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; contact our office to discuss the request's eligibility prior to applying.
- Be current with all state and federal reporting requirements, such as filing of 990 forms.
- No past due grant reports for previous Winneshiek 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. **Fiscal Sponsors will be legally and financially responsible for any grant funds that are awarded.**

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 may submit only one application per department.
- Schools are government entities and may only submit one application per department.
- Grant request minimum is \$3,000; maximum grant request amount is \$20,000.
- **Applicants must use the Budget Template that is linked in the application (see page 4 for example).** Complete budget details and notation of other funding sources secured or pending approval are required. ***The CF Request plus Other Funding column must equal the Total Request Cost column.***
- Use of local vendors for your supplies and services is encouraged, if applicable and feasible.
- Applicants must include bids/estimates for any work being completed and/or equipment/materials to be purchased that are more than 5% of the total costs or more than \$50.

Review Criteria and Funding Priorities

The WCCF is focused on providing grants that create an impact within Winneshiek County. The inclusion of the criteria information and the ability to articulate how the organization will successfully complete a request has a high priority in the scoring of each application. Applications will be reviewed and scored on the following criteria:

- **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 implementation strategy, timeline, partnerships, and realistic plans for future continuation of funding (if applicable) from other sources.
- **Community Need** – The degree to which the request is community-focused and significantly addresses an important need in the county.
- **Request Budget** – Whether the budget is clear, mathematically correct, corresponds to supplied bids/estimates, and demonstrates attempts to secure and/or leverage other funding sources, including matching donations and in-kind services.
- **Impact** - How the request yields substantial benefits to the county for the resources invested.
- **Innovation** - The degree to which the request is creative, strategic, and forward-thinking. A high score requires that this specific request (as distinct from the organization) has not been previously funded.

Grant Selection Committee

The Winneshiek County Community Foundation Committee is made up of community volunteers from throughout Winneshiek 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.winneshiekcfc.org

How to Apply

Applicants interested in seeking grants should fully review these grant guidelines prior to submitting an application 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

- **The grant application submission deadline is 5:00 pm on January 15, 2026.** *Technical assistance for applicants will be available until 5:00 pm on the day of the deadline.*
- **A grant workshop will be held November 17, 2026, at 5:30pm at the Decorah Bank & Trust Learning Center** (202 E Water St, Decorah). You can RSVP for this workshop by using this link: <https://form.jotform.com/252965831213963>
- All applicants will be notified of the results of the grant process in early-mid March 2026.
- Grant award ceremony will be held on March 26, 2026. More details will be provided with the notification letter. Grantees are encouraged to attend with staff, volunteers, and board members.
- Grant Reports, for successful proposals, will be due April 30, 2027.

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.

Application Checklist:

- ___ Guidelines Reviewed
- ___ Eligibility Verified or Fiscal Sponsor Secured
- ___ Budget Complete using Required Template
- ___ Request Bids Uploaded
- ___ All Optional Support Documents Uploaded, if applicable
- ___ Required Signatures Completed
- ___ Application Submitted Online by **5:00 pm** on 1/15/2026

Sample CF Request Budget					
	Request: Food Pantry				
Line-Item Expenses	Total Request Cost	CF Request	Other Funding Amt	Other Funding Source	Other Funding Status
Meat Purchases	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	Donations	Received
Food Bank Purchases	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	Agency	Received
Non-Food Purchases	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	Donations	Secured
			\$ 2,000.00	Agency	Received
			\$ 1,000.00	In-Kind	Pending
Utilities	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 900.00	Agency	Received
			\$ 1,000.00	Grant	Pending
Rent on Building	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,500.00	Agency	Received
			\$ 1,000.00	Grant	Secured
			\$ 1,000.00	In-Kind	Secured
Mileage - P/U Food	\$ 1,500.00		\$ 1,500.00	Donations	Secured
Wages for Staff	\$ 6,000.00		\$ 3,000.00	Agency	Received
			\$ 3,000.00	Grant	Secured
Total	\$ 28,900.00	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 22,400.00		

Instructions:

Enter each expense line item for the project in the Line-Item 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.**

Other Funding Source Definitions:

Agency - Funds from the organization's budget or reserves

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

Grant - Grant funds for this request other than those from the CF, including grants pending/received 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

Other 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