



Grantmaking Guidelines

A guide for seeking grant funding from the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan.

Thank you for considering submitting a proposal to the Community Foundation. We value our community partners and grantees, and we want to work with you to improve the quality of life in our region.

About the Community Foundation

The **Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan** is a permanent community endowment dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in the seven counties of Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Monroe, Washtenaw, Livingston and St. Clair. We seek to create a more vibrant and healthy region – one that attracts, inspires and connects residents, businesses and institutions in ways that foster regional prosperity.

Since our founding in 1984, gifts from thousands of individuals and organizations committed to the future of southeast Michigan have helped to build the Foundation's assets. It is our privilege and responsibility to use our assets to make strategic community investments in ideas, organizations and communities.

Our region is diverse and varied, encompassing thousands of institutions eager to serve it. Therefore, the Foundation's programs support collaborative thinking and learning to promote quality, innovation and synergy among all sectors. We invest in the community by providing informative briefings, educational forums and grants.

We are also keenly interested in what inspires *you*. We look forward to hearing your ideas for transforming our vision for a healthy and prosperous region into reality.

Grantmaking Priorities

While our grants support a range of projects and organizations, we are particularly interested in projects that:

- reflect regional thinking and cooperation
- promote civic participation
- foster innovation and entrepreneurialism
- respond to a unique opportunity to move the region forward
- improve the quality of nonprofit organizations
- leverage public and private resources.

Low priority is given to requests for ongoing operational costs, capital campaigns, annual fund drives, conferences or other one-time events.

Eligibility

The Foundation will make grants to 501(c)(3) organizations, government entities, school districts and universities. While grants to religious organizations are considered, sectarian religious programs are not eligible. Further, we do not make grants to individuals, or to cover deficits or other previously incurred obligations.

Applying to the Foundation

Please review our grantmaking guidelines and call us to discuss your proposed program. This phone call is important. We value your time and do not want you to spend unnecessary hours and resources preparing a proposal unless there is a clear possibility of working together.

When you call us, we will advise you of any targeted grantmaking opportunities that have special application requirements. Otherwise, simply apply to the Foundation.

Proposal Format

The Community Foundation does not usually require a specific application form or proposal format. However, the Grant Application Checklist (see page 3) outlines the items you should include in a proposal. We prefer to have you determine your own proposal format, as we want you to take the space you deem necessary to address issues specific to your proposed project.

Most importantly, the proposal should provide the rationale for the proposed project, why the project is important, and how the project will be sustained in the long run.

Budget

Applicant organizations should submit both a budget for the project they are proposing as well as their organization's current annual budget. Examples of project budget line items are personnel, program materials, evaluation and marketing costs. However, it is important to discuss the need for the project as a whole, and to follow this discussion with specific line items that correspond with what the organization is proposing to do.

There are no restrictions on grant amounts. Grants can range from \$5,000 to \$1 million, but please consider that the majority of our grants range from \$35,000 to \$100,000. The amount of a request should be in scale with the size of your organization. In other words, you should consider the size of the proposed project budget relative to the size of the organization's overall budget. You should discuss an appropriate amount for your request when you call us.

Proposal Deadlines

You can apply to the Community Foundation at any time. However, as a guideline, if you submit your proposal prior to **February 15, May 15, August 15** and **November 15**, you will typically receive a response within 3-4 months. Upon submission, Foundation staff will let you know if notification of a decision is likely to take longer.

Grant Decisions

Numerous factors are taken into account when considering the many requests we receive; the quality of the proposed program, its potential impact and its sustainability are among them. The questions below provide valuable insight into the grant decision process. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list, nor is it intended to be prescriptive. Nonetheless, these questions may serve as guidance for developing a strong proposal.

Quality

- Does the project reflect best practices?
- Is it consistent with the latest knowledge of what works?
- Is the project well-conceived and clearly described?
- Is the project feasible?

Scope

- Does the project promote regional or community vitality?
- Will the proposed activities reach a broad segment of the southeast Michigan community?
- Is the project replicable?
- Does the project promote collaboration across the region?

Impact

- Does the proposed project address a critical unmet need?
- Does the project have a high probability of leading to new solutions to community challenges?
- Does the project have the potential for long-term community impact?

Sustainability

- Will the proposed project leverage additional funds from a variety of sources?
- Is the project of interest to and supported by other funders?
- Is the applicant investing some of its own money into the project?

Organizational Capacity

- Does the project enhance the quality of the applicant organization?
- Does the applicant organization have the capacity to successfully complete the project?
- Does the project provide an opportunity for learning by other nonprofit organizations?
- Is the applicant reaching out for expertise in areas where the organization does not have needed expertise on staff?

Reporting Requirements

If a grant is awarded, the grantee organization will be required to submit a report at the end of the grant period to share the results of the project and to show that all funds were spent as intended. If the grant period is more than 12 months, interim reports may be required before grant payment installments are made.

Grant Application Checklist

The Community Foundation does not have an application form; however, we do ask that your proposal include the items listed below:

1) Cover letter outlining:

- a. legal name of the organization
- b. dollar amount requested
- c. purpose of the proposed project
- d. description of the population being served
- e. length of time for which Community Foundation support is requested.

The CEO/executive director of the organization should sign the cover letter and the application should include some evidence of approval of the request by the organization's board of trustees.

2) Organizational information

- Name, address and telephone number of the applicant organization and main contact person for the proposal
- Mission and brief background of the applicant organization.

3) Project description

- Definition of the issue the proposal is addressing
- Description of the need for the proposed project
- Indication as to whether the proposed activity is new, expanded or an ongoing part of the organization's programming
- Basic objectives of the proposed project
- Detailed work plan and the time frame for accomplishing the project's objectives
- Evaluation plan, including the criteria that will be used for judging the effectiveness of the proposed project, the expected outcome(s), and the impact of the proposed project
- Geographic boundaries and associated zip codes of the area that will be serviced by your proposed project
- Relevant qualifications and experience of the organization and the project's principal staff
- Description of any partnerships that are occurring as a part of the proposed project, including an outline of the roles and responsibilities of each partner.

4) Required financial information

- Dollar amount of grant support requested and the proposed time period for use of these funds
- Detailed budget for the project, including the proposed use of Community Foundation grant funds and any additional support anticipated or secured from other sources
- Provisions for future project funding beyond the Community Foundation's grant period
- Organization's operating budget for the current fiscal year
- Copy of a recent certified financial audit.

5) Supporting materials

- Copy of the most recent Internal Revenue Service 501(c)(3) federal tax-exemption letter, if applicable
- List of current board of directors, trustees or governing board, with individuals' affiliations
- Letters of support or memoranda of understanding from project partners
- Résumés of principal staff for proposed project, if applicable
- Information on the organization's commitment to diversity with regard to staff, board, constituents and program content
- Copy of the most recent annual report, if available.

We do ask that applicants leave materials unbound (note: binder clips are acceptable). All materials must be mailed or delivered to our office. Online or fax submissions are not accepted.

Please submit the original and one additional copy to:

Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan
Attn: Application Submissions
333 W. Fort Street, Suite 2010
Detroit, MI 48226-3134

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 1.888.WE.ENDOW (933.6369).

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333 West Fort Street, Suite 2010
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3134
313.961.6675 | www.cfsem.org