



Community Grant Program

General Operating Support Grant Guidelines

301 SOUTH MAIN STREET | HORSEHEADS, NEW YORK 14845 | 607-739-3900 | WWW.COMMUNITYFUND.ORG

The Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes, Inc. is grateful to support a wide variety of organizations through our Community Grant Program. The Community Grant Program is an open, competitive program through which grants are made to nonprofit organizations that enable us to support our community's most pressing needs and opportunities. Each proposal is reviewed by a panel of community members and formally approved by the foundation's Board of Directors. Awards are determined based on the proposals' value to the residents and communities in the Southern Tier, availability of funding, quality and vision presented in the application.

The Community Foundation is committed to the principles of trust-based philanthropy and advancing equity in our region.

GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT GRANTS

The Community Foundation General Operating Support (GOS) grants are flexible, aim to support an organization's ongoing administrative and infrastructure costs, and to maintain existing, effective programs.

Characteristics of successful applicants include: a clear vision of the organization's role in making a difference in the community, a demonstration of effectiveness through the investment of time and personnel in measuring and planning for success and a written strategic plan that covers two or more years, includes goals and methods to measure effectiveness and is used to form an annual work plan.

General Operating Support grants have moved from an annual grant to a two-year, multi-year grant. Grantees are required to provide an interim report after year 1 of funding and a final report at the end of the two-year grant period.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

We address the current needs of the community through a multiple avenue approach to correct the problems that exist and find creative solutions to avoid the problems in the future. The Community Foundation looks at the holistic needs in the community, including education, arts, infrastructure, animals, the environment, and wellness. Our priorities align with our values that we hope to model together with our nonprofit partners. Our priorities also guide the application review, so we encourage you to review this section as you develop your proposal.

- **Advance equity** - The voices of the underserved and economically diverse are important, and programs designed to foster access for community connections are a priority. Funded programs will provide clearly stated goals for the incorporation of diverse cultures, philosophies, and experiences. Diversity should be present not only in program delivery but also in the leadership, mission, boards, and operations of the organization.



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- **Community Impact** - We support organizations whose work is guided by clear goals for the growth of individuals and communities in the areas of human services, arts and culture, education and youth, health, animal welfare, the environment, and civic affairs.
- **Collaborate with community** – We strive to create healthier conditions for people in our community by collectively improving and developing them together. We believe in authentic community relationships.
- **Innovation and creativity** - We support promising solutions whose results may be unpredictable.
- **Sustainability** – We encourage proposals that will use awarded funds to strengthen their capacity and expertise to serve our most underserved.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applications include 501(c)(3) public charities in good standing with the IRS, *faith-based organizations, and government entities that serve Chemung and/or SE Steuben counties.

- **501(c)(3)** – The organization must have at minimum, a two-year operating history after the date of receipt of its 501(c)(3) classification
- **Operating Budget** - Annual operating expenses greater than \$100,000 as reflected in the most recently filed I.R.S. Form 990.
- **Employees** - Have at least one full-time paid employee (paid minimum wage or more, working at least 35 hours per week, classified as a W-2 employee) for the 12 months prior to applying.
- **Location** – The organization must serve Chemung and/or SE Steuben County residents. While we will give preference to local applicants, organizations do not have to be based in Chemung and/or SE Steuben counties.
- **History** – The organization must have received a Community Grant Program grant within the last three years.
- **Compliance** – If you have a current grant through any Community Foundation program, you must have successfully completed the scope of work defined in prior grant application(s) and have submitted any follow-up report due.
- **Number of Applications** – Each applicant may submit one application.
- **Governance** - Have a current written strategic or business plan for the whole organization that covers at least 24 months. The plan should include: 1. Mission and vision statements, 2. Stakeholder participation (staff, board, consumers/clients, volunteers, etc.), 3. Strategic goals and measurable objectives, 4. Implementation plan showing action steps, a timeline and assigned staff and board responsibilities, 5. Quarterly, semi-annual, or annual written assessment by staff and board to measure organizational progress towards goals.



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Approaches

We welcome proposals from organizations from across the spectrum including those providing direct services, advocacy, community organizing, and other approaches as appropriate. Priority will be given to organizations that:

- Are financially viable, have evidence of strong management and resource development capacity, and operate effective programs; and
- Can significantly impact targeted and/or underserved populations.

Restrictions

As required by IRS rules, grant funds may not be used: a) to carry out lobbying activities b) for partisan political purposes c) to make a grant to an individual d) to support annual campaigns, special event fundraisers, sponsorships, or endowments e) for religious purposes f) for loan reimbursements for capital projects already underway or completed g) trips for schools or clubs or h) Retroactive expenses or activities that occur before the Community Foundation's decision deadline

Grant Size

Award sizes will be dependent on organization's annual operating budget ranging from \$40,000 to \$20,000 for two years. Total awards distributed over a two-year cycle, in accordance with an organization's operating budget are:

- **Between \$500k-\$1M** | \$40,000 Total Award
- **Between \$300k-\$500k** | \$30,000 Total Award
- **Between \$100k-\$300K** | \$20,000 Total Award

Type of Funding

All general operating support grant awards will be made with the intention of serving as mission-building, general operating support. The Community Foundation will not dictate how grant funds should be used. The intention with this funding is that it will help grantees become more sustainable.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Letter of Intent deadline is June 1. The full application is due no later than July 1 at 5:30 p.m.

Applicants should apply through the Community Foundation's online platform (Foundant Grant Lifecycle Manager). A link to the application can be found on the Community Foundation website at www.communityfund.org

All applicants must submit a letter of intent prior to beginning an application. The letter of intent is within the online platform. **Once your letter of intent has been submitted and successfully accepted, you will receive an**



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email notifying you that you may begin your application.

Private schools and faith-based organizations may apply for unrestricted – general operating support. Characteristics of eligible applicants include and must demonstrate that their services and programs are:

- Inclusive and accessible to the greater community
- open to all regardless of religious affiliation
- inclusive and available to low-income or underserved students/participants

NOTICE OF GRANT DECISIONS

Applicants will be notified of approval or declination by letter following the Community Foundation’s Board of Director’s meeting, typically held at the end of August.

An unsuccessful application does not reflect a judgment about the worthiness of a particular project. The Community Foundation routinely receives more requests than it can fund. If your request is denied, we encourage you to contact the Director, Grants and Communications to discuss specific reasons.

CONNECT WITH US

Questions about applying for a grant, the grant application process and any other grant related questions should be directed to Sara Shaut, Vice President of Programs. ses@communityfund.org. 607-739-3900

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF ELMIRA-CORNING AND THE FINGER LAKES, INC.

The Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes, Inc. is a nonprofit organization classified as a publicly supported 501(c)(3) charity under the Internal Revenue Code. We are governed by a community-based, volunteer board of directors and administered by professional staff. We serve the counties of Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, and Yates in the Southern Tier of New York State.

Vision:

A thriving and enriching community for all.

Mission:

Leveraging the power of philanthropy to create a great place to live, give, and thrive.



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COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What organizations are eligible to apply? Does location matter?

Eligible applications are all 501(c)(3) public charities in good standing with the IRS. Fiscally sponsored organizations **are not** eligible.

What is mission-building support?

We are committed to creating more flexibility for our nonprofit partners. Our funding is designed so that nonprofits can determine the best use of funds to support their work and impact. This type of funding provides flexibility to assess and determine where grant dollars are most needed, and allows for innovation, emergent action, and sustainability.

Why does the foundation ask for Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion + Belonging (JEDI+B) information?

The mission of the Community Foundation is to leverage the power of philanthropy to create a great place to live, give, and thrive for all people. It is critical that we address the inequalities and injustices within our organization and through our work in communities. The Community Foundation is committed to JEDI+B and we see an ongoing need to gather information and invite conversation with our grantees.

How do I submit my application through the online platform?

Applicants should apply through the Community Foundation's online platform (Foundant Grant Lifecycle Manager). A link to the application can be found on the Community Foundation website at www.communityfund.org

All applicants must submit a letter of intent prior to beginning an application. The letter of intent is within the online platform. **Once your letter of intent has been submitted and successfully accepted, you will receive an email notifying you that you may begin your application.**

What is the review and selection process?

Each application is first reviewed by the Vice President of Programs followed by a panel of community members. This ensures rich perspectives from people with personal and professional experiences related to each funding category. Each year we try and expand our recruitment to ensure a diverse panel of community leaders. Grant reviews and ratings are made in consultation with the grant review panel. Successful applicants are formally approved by the foundation's Board of Directors.

If awarded, will I get my full funding ask?

We learned that annual funding limited our nonprofits impact. Starting this year, we will fund two-year cycle grants with award sizes to scale in accordance with an organization's annual operating budget.



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Will I be able to get feedback on a declined proposal?

Yes. Organizations are encouraged to contact the Community Foundation to discuss proposal feedback.

If my organization receives a grant, what is the reporting process?

Two reports will be required: a short interim, annual "update" after the first full year of funding and a final report at the end of the two-year grant period.

Does my organization need to be a certain size to apply?

Yes. Nonprofit organizations with an operating budget of at least \$100,000 are eligible to apply for general operating support.

What types of nonprofit work will you consider?

The Community Foundation funds a wide variety of programs and projects across all program areas including arts and culture, education and youth, the environment, community development and civic affairs, health and human services, and animal welfare.

I have a current grant through another Community Foundation program. Can I still apply for general operating support?

Yes. We do not limit nonprofits to receiving funding from one grant program. You can apply to the Community Grant Program if your current grant(s) is in good standing.

I am a college or university. Can I apply?

No. Unrestricted – General Operating Support requests are limited to traditional, community-based nonprofit organizations. Colleges or Universities may apply for Program Grants.

I'm a faith-based organization. Can I apply?

Yes. We welcome applications from faith-based programs that provide programs, services, or activities for the broader community that align with our mission and guidelines. However, we do not fund work focused on spreading a particular religious belief or that is limited to serving members of your organization.



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I'm a local government office. Can I apply?

No. Unrestricted – General Operating Support requests are limited to traditional, community-based nonprofit organizations. Local government offices may apply for Program Grants.

How do I get in touch with the Foundation staff if I have more questions?

Organizations considering an application, especially first-time applicants, are encouraged to contact the Vice President of Programs to discuss your funding need, share your work, and answer any questions you may have,

If you have unanswered questions after reviewing the guidelines and this FAQ, please reach out to Sara Shaut, Vice President of Programs, ses@communityfund.org