COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF ELMIRA-CORNING AND THE FINGER LAKES
301 SOUTH MAIN STREET | HORSEHEADS, NEW YORK 14845 | 607-739-3900 | WWW.COMMUNITYFUND.ORG

SMART WORKS
About, Application Requirements, Procedures & Metrics

Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes is encouraging young professionals to stay in the Southern Tier and would like to help address the growing student-debt crisis. While the definition of a young professional can vary, generally they are characterized as highly entrepreneurial, civic-minded people between the ages of 21 and 40 with a college degree. If you are a graduate with a four-year degree or higher and student-debt, the Community Foundation will reward your volunteerism and professional investment in the Southern Tier with a monthly student loan payment program called Smart Works. The intent is to ease young professional’s financial burden by making monthly student loan payments to a lender, thereby having more money to invest locally as well as have the power to reach your personal and financial goals faster than ever.

*The Community Foundation would like to give young professionals a solid reason to remain in or move to the area.*

HOW IT WORKS

Smart Works is a student-debt repayment program for young professionals living and working in the Southern Tier. If selected for enrollment in Smart Works, participants will receive a $7,200 * annual and renewable benefit for up to ten years in the form of monthly student loan payments (up to $600) paid directly to their lender(s). Smart Works program participants must provide at least 4 hours of monthly meaningful volunteer service to a local non-profit of their choosing. "Meaningful volunteer service" is an official commitment or dedication to a particular nonprofit or organization. This can include, but is not limited to, serving on a Board of Directors, becoming a youth mentor, or consistent, scheduled volunteering at a local non-profit. (Please note, all volunteer activities must be approved, and hours will be tracked during your time in the program.) Smart Works enrollment requires that you attend at least four quarterly meetings focused on reaching your budgeting goals and guiding your volunteering efforts.

*Payments affiliated with the program are taxable income.*

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Must live and work in Chemung, Steuben, Schuyler, and/or Yates County
- Age between 21 and 40
- Live in a household with an income no greater than $100,000
- Preference given to workers in the non-profit sector and businesses with fewer than 100 employees
- Must have a four-year degree or higher
- Must provide 2 reference letters
- Candidate must pass a credit and criminal background check
- If selected, must agree to attend mandatory quarterly educational and community service-driven meetings

Go to https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=communityfund to apply.

Please note that applications accepted during 2023 have an extremely limited number of spots available. Questions? Send an email to ses@communityfund.org or call 607.739.3900
More on process:

- Application:
  - CF makes first pass at approval/denial of applications.
- Criteria:
  - If the applicant meets criteria, they move to interview stage.
  - If the applicant does not meet criteria, they receive declination letter.
- Panel Interview:
  - Comprised of President and Vice President of Programs (CF), up to 3 CF BOD members from Strategic Initiatives Committee and Board of Directors.
  - If the interview is successful, the applicant must agree to background/credit check.
  - If the interview is unsuccessful, the applicant will receive a declination letter.
- Background/credit check:
  - Successful - the applicant will be sent an offer letter to become enrolled in the Smart Works pilot.
  - Unsuccessful – declination letter.
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