



## Grant Program Guidelines

The Manistee County Community Foundation was established in 1987 to help ensure a bright future for Manistee County.

To us, Manistee County is more than a geographic region — it's the place we call home. And because of that, we have worked hard to engage donors, partners and citizens in making our community a place where everyone can thrive. Over the years, the Community Foundation has helped to create and fund numerous projects that improve the lives of those who live here.

The Community Foundation's Grant Program is supported by multiple funds, some of which are flexible in purpose and others that support particular aspects of life. Grant applicants are encouraged to review the [List of Grant Program Funds](#) to learn about each fund, supported purposes, and any specific eligibility criteria or grant requirements.

We seek to make strategic investments to meet the ever changing needs of our community and look to partner with organizations to help create lasting solutions to complex problems. Effecting change requires both passion and measured thought, and we work hard to find proposals that encompass both.

As we do our grantmaking, the Manistee County Community Foundation is committed to honoring the intentions of our many donors and creating solutions that make everlasting positive impacts. There are multiple ways donors give to help initiate and sustain these programs and the Foundation is grateful to our named and anonymous donors who make our Grant Program possible.

And above all else, we are keenly interested in what inspires you. We look forward to hearing your ideas for building a community that works well for all.

### Maximizing Our Impact

The Community Foundation generally seeks to invest in projects that do the following, although we do not expect that all of these elements will be addressed in every application:

- Address root causes
- Will make a lasting impact on our community and are sustainable
- Attract funding and other resources to our community
- Demonstrate collaboration and/or coordination of efforts or resources
- Target underserved members of our community
- Are accessible to participants, regardless of their identity or physical, social, financial or other circumstances
- Include diverse perspectives, especially of those who stand to benefit

### What We Fund

The Community Foundation Grant Program will consider support for a wide variety of charitable purposes. Our interest areas encompass all aspects of life including youth and education, arts and culture, the environment, health and human services, recreation, community development and more. We will consider support for operating and administrative expenses associated with a specific project, but we do not typically provide general operating support. Support for major capital improvements or maintenance is generally limited to recreational purposes or community centers at this time.

We do not award grants for religious instruction, worship, evangelism or proselytization; projects that are not fully accessible to persons regardless of their individual religious creed or convictions; or projects that require participation in a religious program specific to receiving the service.

The Community Foundation will not knowingly support organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability or any other legally protected characteristics.

### **Basic Eligibility**

There are some specific eligibility rules to keep in mind before you consider applying.

- Eligible applicants include: tax-exempt 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations, school districts, units of government, including federally recognized tribes. Support may also be considered for religious institutions.
- Projects must be located in Manistee County, unless pre-approved by the Community Foundation, and benefit residents of Manistee County
- We do not make grants to individuals, or grants to cover deficits, or other previously incurred obligations
- In general, we will not consider a new grant to an organization that has an open grant or has not met prior grant requirements.

The Community Foundation Board of Directors may consider additional criteria when determining whether or not a project is eligible for funding. Interested applicants are encouraged to contact the Community Foundation with questions about their eligibility.

### **How to Apply**

Our grants support a wide range of projects and organizations. As our potential partner, we ask that you read these guidelines and then, if you think there is a potential fit, please reach out to us. The first step in seeking a grant from the Community Foundation is to submit a simple [Grant Inquiry Form](#). 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. Grant Inquiries are encouraged year-round and requested to be submitted at least two weeks ahead of an application deadline. We will respond to your inquiry within two weeks to let you know if your project meets our guidelines and will provide a link to our grant application portal if the project is considered eligible. Submitted applications will be considered during the next open Grant Cycle.

If you decide to pursue an application, simply follow the steps in the [Grant Application Summary and Checklist](#) to assemble the items you should include in your proposal. You will submit your application through the link we provide to the grant application portal.

While we encourage all applicants to use our online portal, alternative application formats may be made available to applicants following the review of their initial inquiry.

### **Application Deadlines and Funding Decision Dates**

We ask that you submit your grant application following the Application Deadlines and Funding Decision Dates listed on our website. *Note: If a Grant Application Deadline falls on a weekend, the grant will be due the following Monday.*

As a special consideration, the Community Foundation is able to accept requests of \$5,000 or less for recreational projects on a rolling basis and generally makes these funding decisions within 45 days.

All Funding decisions are approved by the Community Foundation Board of Directors. Proactive grants may also be awarded at the discretion of the Community Foundation Board of Directors.

Please keep these response times under consideration when crafting your proposal—assume that if a grant is awarded, you would not receive funds until after the Funding Decision Date and the timeline of the project should reflect that. Therefore, please only include line items related to activities that would occur after a potential grant is awarded as **grant funds may not be used to reimburse expenses incurred prior to a Funding Decision Date.**

### **Grant Amounts**

The amount of funds available for granting each year is determined by the Community Foundation Board of Directors in accordance with donor intent and the Foundation's Spending Policy. Generally, the minimum grant award will be \$1,000 and the maximum grant award will be up to \$10,000, with the exception of recreation grants which, through the remarkable generosity of a donor, may be up to \$100,000. Applicants with recreation funding needs that exceed the maximum grant award amount should contact the Community Foundation to discuss their project.

### **Applicant Match Requirement**

Applicants must contribute at least 10% of the total project cost, known as match, which **may not be spent prior to the grant award date.** Additional match is encouraged and may include grants from other sources and donations. The requested grant amount plus the total of all match sources should equal the total project cost.

Example:

\$ 5,000 = total project cost

\$ 1,000 = total applicant cash match (must be at least 10% of total project cost)

\$ 4,000 = requested grant amount (may not exceed 90% of total project cost)

### **Project Requirements**

- Any facility developed or maintained should be usable by people of all ages, abilities and income, if reasonably possible. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements must be met. Projects that include elements of universal design are encouraged. All required permits must be secured.
- Applicants must have control of any property being developed such as fee simple ownership, a permanent easement or a long term lease. Any exceptions to this requirement should be discussed with, and may be approved by, the Community Foundation.
- Equipment purchased or a facility / structure developed as a result of the grant shall remain under ownership by the grantee and used exclusively for projects or programs administered by the grantee for the useful life of the equipment. Any exceptions to this requirement should be discussed with, and may be approved by, the Community Foundation.
- Land acquired as a result of a grant shall remain under ownership by the grantee, or a qualified successor organization, and available for a charitable, recreational purpose in perpetuity. Any exceptions to this requirement should be discussed with, and may be approved by, the MCCF.

This may not be a complete list of project requirements and requirements may be modified by the Community Foundation Board of Directors. Please speak with one of our Program staff about the specifics of your proposed project, including any questions you may have.

### **Grant Period and Reporting Requirements**

Generally, projects should be completed within one year of a grant award. Larger recreational projects may be allowed up to two years for completion. Grant extensions may be considered. 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 one year, interim reports may be required.

### **Grant Decisions**

Numerous factors are taken into account when considering the many requests we receive; the quality of the proposed project, its potential impact and its sustainability are among them. The questions below, along with the elements listed under [Maximizing Our Impact](#), provide 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.

Why is this a compelling project that should be considered for funding?

- Is there a clear and documented need?
- What are the benefits to our community?
- Is it accessible?
- Is there support for the project?
- Is there potential for lasting impact?
- Does it align with project elements or priorities that we seek to fund?

Does the proposed project make sense?

- Is the project well-conceived and clearly described?
- Does it address the identified need?
- Does it reflect best practices and current knowledge of what works?
- Is the project feasible?
- Is there collaboration or coordination of efforts?

Does the applicant have the capacity to do the project?

- Does the project align with the organization's mission?
- Does the organization possess the human, financial, technical resources and knowledge to carry out the project?
- Will the project help the organization increase its impact in the future?
- Does the project attract financial and other resources?
- Is the project sustainable?

**Thank you for considering submitting a proposal to the Community Foundation. We value your ideas and look forward to hearing from you!**