

Competitive Grant Guidelines

ABOUT THE LAKE COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

In response to the growing needs in Lake County and in partnership with local community leaders and The Chicago Community Trust, The Lake County Community Foundation was established in 2003 to engage residents in identifying community needs and priorities and to promote collective philanthropy within the county to meet these needs. Since then, the Foundation has made more than \$1.5 million in grants to 70 nonprofit organizations and has launched county-wide initiatives that will benefit residents of the county for years to come. It has also provided support to dozens of agencies through its convening activities such as conferences, training sessions, educational seminars and capacity building activities.

The Lake County Community Foundation is an affiliate of The Chicago Community Trust. For 94 years, the Trust has helped individuals preserve their charitable legacy in the region they call home.

The mission of The Lake County Community Foundation is to improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable residents of our county by promoting collective philanthropy, providing civic leadership, and partnering with our grantees.

GRANT MAKING STRATEGY

The Foundation is committed to allocating its limited competitive grant making resources to support nonprofit organizations serving residents in Lake County, Illinois. Specifically, the Foundation seeks to address community challenges by supporting agencies working to resolve the urgent needs of the most vulnerable individuals and families in the county.

The Foundation encourages innovation, organizational development and collaboration among human service providers to ensure the network's

capacity to more effectively and efficiently meet community challenges.

DIVERSITY

The Foundation is committed to serving all who live and work in Lake County and believes diversity enhances an organization, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or physical, developmental or cognitive ability. This commitment is reflected in how the Foundation evaluates grant proposals.

FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

Special consideration will be given to programs and organizations that:

- Work in collaborative partnership with other organizations to share resources for maximum efficiency and impact
- Have a strong and qualified network of volunteers available with proper training and supervision offered
- Seek innovative approaches to solving the county's most pressing challenges

WHO MAY APPLY?

- Any qualified 501(c)(3) organization as defined by the Internal Revenue Service Code that serves residents of Lake County, Illinois

OR

- Any organization that has partnered with a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that will act as the fiscal agent for the grant

AND

- The applicant organization must meet all necessary requirements of IRS code

COMPETITIVE GRANT FOCUS AREAS

The Foundation will focus its grant making in the following areas:

Education

To advance the academic performance of underserved adults and children, to close the gap between high- and low-achieving students, or to initiate, sustain and strengthen innovative educational approaches and techniques.

Health Care

To improve access to quality medical resources, including mental health, for all residents, to help expand the capacity of institutions that provide services to the medically uninsured and underinsured, to advocate on behalf of populations that lack access to health care or to promote healthier lifestyles and reduce the burden of disease and chronic conditions.

Human Services

To alleviate hunger and homelessness and stem the cycle of poverty, to increase the effectiveness of the human services sector in meeting the needs of vulnerable families and individuals, or to advocate, protect and promote the programs serving the needs of low-income residents.

Community/Economic Development

To support economic development, encourage community revitalization and initiate civic engagement.

Strengthening the Nonprofit Sector

To enhance a single organization's ability to work towards its mission and sustain itself over the long term or to provide shared capacity building support for two or more organizations. Specific projects may include (but are not restricted to) organizational development, strategic planning, evaluation, staff and board development, increasing technological capacity and program feasibility studies.

Grants **WILL NOT** be made for the following:

- Capital improvements/campaigns
- Endowment campaigns
- Scholarships
- Reduction or liquidation of existing debt
- Individuals
- Religious proselytizing
- Political campaigns
- For the sole purpose of writing, publishing, producing, or distributing audio, visual, or printed material (unless part of an expanded development effort)
- For the sole purpose of conducting a conference, festival, exhibition, or meeting including incidental related expenses
- Sponsorships of events/fundraisers
- Memberships/dues

SIZE AND DURATION OF COMPETITIVE GRANTS

Grant commitments range from \$5,000 to \$25,000; grants generally average \$10,000.

No organization may have more than one active grant or grant request with the Foundation and/or with The Chicago Community Trust at any time. All grants will be for one year in duration from the time the grant is approved. Grants may be renewable, but organizations must submit a request for a grant each year to be considered for a renewal. Organizations are eligible to receive funding for three years consecutively, and then must take one year off before applying again.

GRANT MAKING TIMELINE

The Foundation's grant making meetings are held once per year, and the grant deadlines will be posted on the website www.lakecountycf.org.

January 4, 2010 by 5:00 p.m.	Letter of inquiry (LOI) due
January 29, 2010	Organization notified of status of LOI
<i>If organization is invited to submit a proposal:</i>	
February 25, 2010 by 5:00 p.m.	Full proposal due
June 7, 2010	Organizations notified of grant decision

APPLICATION PROCESS

The grant application process is a competitive one and acceptance at any stage does not guarantee funding. The steps for applying are as follows:

Step 1: The Letter of Inquiry

The Foundation requires all grant seekers to submit a short letter of inquiry, outlining information about the applicant's organization and the request for which funding will be sought. The LOI template can be found on the Grant Seekers page of the Foundation's website: www.lakecountycf.org/grants.html.

Step 2: The Proposal

All LOIs are reviewed by Foundation staff and a limited number of organizations will be invited to submit a full proposal. This invitation does not in any way guarantee funding. Organizations invited to submit a full proposal will continue the grant process by completing the proposal template and submitting it, along with all required supporting documents, by the stated deadline. The proposal template can be found on the Grant Seekers page of the Foundation's website: www.lakecountycf.org/grants.html.

Step 3: Proposal Review

Following submission, proposals will be reviewed as follows:

- **Staff contact:** The program officer assigned to the proposal will contact the agency to confirm that the required content has been included in the proposal, request any needed additional information, schedule an appointment or site visit as appropriate, and discuss any special needs or circumstances that may exist.
- **Staff review:** The Foundation's program staff reviews all proposals. As part of the review process, staff may make site visits, contact other agencies, foundations, or individuals who have knowledge of the grant-seeking agency. Individual staff reviews are presented to staff colleagues for discussion and approval.
- **Changes:** During the time that a proposal is under review, an applicant must notify the Foundation of any significant changes in leadership (staff or board), financial circumstances, or the capacity of the agency to carry out the proposed activities.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Letters of inquiry and full proposals must be submitted electronically to the grants manager at **lccfgrantsmanager@lakecountycf.org**.

Please contact Susan Niederlander at 847.377.0520 ext. 23 or susan@lakecountycf.org with questions about the Foundation's grant making.

THE
LAKE COUNTY
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

AN AFFILIATE OF
THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST

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