



2024 GRANT MAKING GUIDELINES

NEW IN 2024

- The Early Childhood Education priority area has been moved from the Fall Grant Cycle to the Spring Grant Cycle. This means that Early Childhood Education will reopen in January with the 2024 Spring Grant Cycle—details on page 3.
- LCCF's previous policy stated that organizations were eligible for five consecutive years of funding followed by one required rest year. To better align with our shift towards **trust-based philanthropy**, we are eliminating this rule, leaving no limit on consecutive years of funding. Please keep in mind, however, that LCCF is committed to welcoming new grantees each year, particularly community-based grassroots organizations led by impacted community members.
- Due to limited resources, LCCF is temporarily eliminating the Capacity Building priority area in 2024 so that we are able to concentrate our resources to support our work and investment in our Growing Communities priority area. We hope to reintroduce the Capacity Building priority area sometime in the future.
- All applications will be made via our **Foundant** Grants Management System. LCCF has many **resources** to help you navigate the system.
- The maximum grant request for the 2024 Growing Communities priority area is \$30,000.

PROGRAM & COMMUNITY INVESTMENT STRATEGY

In 2022, LCCF implemented a new **Program & Community Investment Strategy** to guide the Foundation's work and priorities over the coming years. The strategy is guided by the principles of **trust-based philanthropy**, **equity** and **addressing root causes**. Our staff is committed to ensuring that we are using these lenses in our programs, grantmaking, our organizational culture and in all that we do.

With this new strategy in place, we have identified three program pillars that will shape how we spend our time and resources going forward:

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Within this pillar is our **Small Business Growth Initiative**, a focus on safe and affordable housing, workforce development and investments in innovative strategies to decrease our county's economic disparities.

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

This pillar encompasses our **Community Strength Funding Program**, **Leadership Development** and **Capacity Building** priority areas, and has an emphasis on supporting grassroots community-based organizations, community organizing and public policy initiatives.

RAPID COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Much of our grantmaking in our Growing Communities priority area (previously Basic Human Needs) falls under this pillar. (See details on page 3.) Additionally, this pillar encompasses our Crisis Relief Fund which will include an increased focus on violence prevention and intervention in Lake County.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR APPLICANTS?

As a community foundation, we remain committed to investing in organizations working to improve the lives of our Lake County neighbors. Much of what we have historically funded falls within this framework. In our grantmaking going forward, we will prioritize applications that align with one or more of the three pillars of **Economic Justice**, **Community Ownership** and **Rapid Community Response**.

Our priority areas of Growing Communities (formerly Basic Human Needs), Early Childhood Education, Leadership Development, Capacity Building and Animal Welfare will remain the same. We will be more intentional about selecting grassroots community-based organizations for funding. We define grassroots organizations as groups located within the community led by people from the community addressing issues that directly affect them. We believe grassroots organizations have the lived experience and knowledge of the community to create impact in their neighborhoods with their neighbors.

The chart below indicates where our funding opportunities fall within these pillars:



ECONOMIC JUSTICE	COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP	RAPID COMMUNITY RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing Communities priority area (ex: safe & affordable housing, workforce development, projects that decrease economic disparities, etc.) • Early Childhood Education priority area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing Communities priority area (community organizing, public policy initiatives, initiatives that create knowledge, resources and enthusiasm for a community issue, or ideas that help community reimagine) • <u>Community Strength Funding Initiative</u> • <u>Leadership Development</u> priority area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing Communities priority area (food, emergency shelter, healthcare, mental health, youth support, immigrant support, legal services, etc.) • Lake County <u>Crisis Relief</u> grants

GRANT CYCLES, PRIORITIES AND TIMELINES

The Foundation has two competitive grant cycles:

- **SPRING GRANT CYCLE: Growing Communities and Early Childhood Education priority areas**
Growing Communities opens in January 2024 and includes a letter of inquiry process; the Early Childhood Education priority area has been moved to the Spring Cycle and will reopen in January 2024 — see p. 4
- **FALL GRANT CYCLE: Leadership Development and Animal Welfare priority areas**
Opens in August 2024; does not include a letter of inquiry

SPRING GRANT CYCLE

Growing Communities Priority Area

PROPOSALS CONSIDERED: \$5,000 - \$30,000

AVAILABLE FUNDS: APPROXIMATELY \$300,000*

**A generous donor advised fund holder has committed an additional \$500,000 to support this grantmaking.*

LCCF supports organizations that work collaboratively to address the needs of our residents. As a funder, we desire to have impact beyond just the basic necessities and to create a place where our neighbors can not only survive, but where they can thrive. While we will certainly invest in basic needs such as food and shelter, we also hope to see organizations tackling community issues in ways that will ultimately address root causes and result in systemic change.

The Foundation accepts both project-based and general operating requests through this priority area. We believe that to create a thriving Lake County, everyone needs equitable access to:

- Affordable, nutritious food
- Affordable, comprehensive health care (including mental health)
- Safe and affordable housing
- Education and workforce opportunities
- Immigration and legal support services

The Foundation's goal is to invest in work that allows people who are disproportionately affected by lack of access to obtain support through wraparound services, a continuum of care, or close collaborations with other providers. Grants will be prioritized for work that:

- Is led by grassroots, community-based organizations as defined on page 2
- Addresses barriers to access of services and benefits for our neighbors in Lake County
- Addresses otherwise unmet basic needs as the only service provider in the area



Early Childhood Education Priority Area *(Reopens January 2024)*

PROPOSALS CONSIDERED: \$5,000 - \$10,000

AVAILABLE FUNDS: APPROXIMATELY \$20,000

LCCF has moved Early Childhood from the Fall Grant Cycle to the Spring Grant Cycle, meaning it will reopen in January 2024—the same time as the Growing Communities priority area. Organizations that receive funding in the Spring Cycle are eligible to receive funding in the Leadership Development priority area in the Fall Grant Cycle. This priority area does not require a letter of inquiry process.

Organizations that promote early childhood education (prenatal–age 5) will be invited to apply for grants made through the Lake County Early Childhood Education Fund. This restricted fund was established in 2010 with the purpose of promoting early childhood education across Lake County, Illinois.

Grant funds are prioritized for work that:

- Supports new and innovative approaches to provide early childhood education
- Addresses barriers to access of early childhood education opportunities for Lake County residents
- Addresses otherwise unmet needs as the only service provider in the area

2024 SPRING GRANT CYCLE PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The Growing Communities priority area requires a letter of inquiry. The LOI template requires organizations to briefly summarize their funding request and expected outcomes. The LOI will be available on the LCCF [grant portal](#) on **January 15, 2024** and will be due by **February 2, 2024**. LCCF will then review submitted LOIs and invite select organizations to submit full proposals. The Early Childhood Education priority area does not include an LOI and instead requires a full application. Full applications for both priority areas will be due by **March 22, 2024**.

2024 SPRING GRANT CYCLE TIMELINE

January 15, 2024	Spring Cycle opens; letter of inquiry for Growing Communities priority area and application for Early Childhood Education available on grant portal
February 2, 2024	Growing Communities letter of inquiry due by 5 p.m. via portal
March 1, 2024	Organizations invited to submit full Growing Communities proposal notified
March 22, 2024	Full applications for Growing Communities and Early Childhood Education due by 5 p.m. via portal
April—mid-May 2023	Foundation's due diligence process
May 22, 2024	Grant awards determined by LCCF Board of Directors
May 24, 2024	Grant recipients notified
June 2024	Grant awards disbursed
December 6, 2024	Mid-year grant report due by 5 p.m. via portal
July 18, 2025	Final grant report due by 5 p.m. via portal

FALL GRANT CYCLE

Nonprofit Capacity Building

Due to limited resources, the Foundation is pausing the Capacity Building priority area in 2024 to concentrate our investment and support of the Growing Communities priority area. We hope to relaunch this priority area in the future after identifying a sustainable funding source.

Leadership Development

PROPOSALS CONSIDERED: \$1,000 - \$5,000

AVAILABLE FUNDS: APPROXIMATELY \$20,000

The Foundation has identified a critical need to invest in high quality, accessible and relevant leadership development opportunities to help support Lake County's nonprofit sector. As high capacity nonprofit leaders prepare for and enter retirement, there is an urgent need to cultivate a pipeline of talent that has the capacity and confidence to step in and lead. The Foundation is committed to investing in the future of our county's nonprofits and their leaders through this priority area.

Grant funds are prioritized for work that:

- Provides leadership development opportunities that help build a pipeline of competent, emerging leaders for the county's nonprofit sector
- Increases access for leaders of color and other underrepresented groups to quality programming
- Builds the overall capacity of the county's nonprofit sector

[Read more](#) about eligible leadership development projects.

Please note that this priority area is intended to support cohorts and coalitions that impact Lake County's greater nonprofit sector. Contact Emily Weber at Emily@lakecountycf.org with questions.

Animal Welfare

PROPOSALS CONSIDERED: \$1,000 - \$5,000

AVAILABLE FUNDS: APPROXIMATELY \$20,000

Organizations that attend to the needs of animals in Lake County are invited to apply for grants made through the Lake County Humane Society Fund. 16% of this restricted fund's spending allocation is designated for this purpose annually.

Grant funds are prioritized for work that:

- Cultivates new and innovative approaches to support animal welfare in Lake County
- Addresses otherwise unmet needs as the only service provider in the area

2024 FALL GRANT CYCLE PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The Fall Grant Cycle priority areas **do not** require a letter of inquiry.

2023 FALL GRANT CYCLE TIMELINE	
August 5, 2024	Application open in grant portal
September 6, 2024	Applications due by 5 p.m. via portal
September-October	Foundation's due diligence process
November 20, 2024	Grant awards determined by LCCF board of directors
November 25, 2024	Grant recipients notified
December 2024	Grant awards disbursed
December 12, 2025	Final report due by 5 p.m. via portal
December 13, 2024	Final report due by 5 p.m. via portal

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

All grant requests must be submitted via LCCF's [Foundant grant portal](#) for review by Foundation staff, the LCCF Grants and Community Outreach Committee and the Board of Directors.

Please note that in 2022, LCCF added evaluation criteria designed to gauge whether the applicant organization is reflective of the community it serves and to encourage and provide support for applicants to engage on an institutional equity journey.

Applications will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Request aligns with the Foundation's [mission and values](#) and with its strategic pillars of [Economic Justice](#), [Community Ownership](#) and [Rapid Community Response](#).
- Request responds to a high priority need based on current Lake County specific data
- The applicant's staff, leadership and board are reflective of the community it serves. If not, the organization is taking meaningful steps to prioritize and support diversity and equity.
- Applicants either have their own diversity statement or will adopt the Foundation's [Diversity Statement](#) if there is not one in place.
- Strong, documented partnerships currently in place
- Request has potential to leverage other resources or donor support
- High probability of affecting significant change over the next 3 years
- Cost-effective delivery of direct services or advocacy
- Likelihood of success and a track record of provider(s)/partners in achieving outcomes
- Strong methods for tracking outcomes

Like the nonprofits we serve, LCCF is on a journey toward becoming a more equitable institution. We welcome the opportunity to join in conversation with you and offer support in your organization's efforts to move this critical work forward. Please read more about how LCCF can support your organization in racial equity work [here](#).

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The Foundation considers applications from organizations that demonstrate success and sustainability with program goals and outcomes.

Eligible organizations are:

- Nonprofit agencies with evidence of tax exempt status under [Section 501 \(c\)\(3\) of the Internal Revenue Code](#) or those using a 501 (c)(3) fiscal agent
- Eligible applicants MUST be in good standing with the IRS
- Located within and/or primarily serving residents of Lake County, except for regional, statewide or national projects or research that may benefit a substantial portion of Lake County residents
- Non-discriminatory in the hiring of staff or in providing services on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin or ability

FUNDING LIMITATIONS

Grants **will not** be made for the following:

- Scholarships
- Individuals
- Sectarian purposes (programs that promote or require a religious doctrine)
- Support of single-disease oriented research, treatment or care
- The sole purpose of writing, publishing, producing or distributing audio, visual or printed material (with the exception of our Capacity Building grants)
- The sole purpose of conducting conferences, festivals, exhibitions or meetings
- Reducing operating deficits or liquidating existing debt
- Capital improvements/campaigns
- Endowment campaigns
- Political campaigns
- Sponsorship of events/fundraisers
- Memberships/dues

ABOUT THE LAKE COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The Lake County Community Foundation asserts that the quality of life of Lake County can be improved through an earnest effort to bring community members, organizations, government, businesses, corporations and civic leaders together to establish a common vision, adopt a shared set of measurable goals and pursue evidence-based activities that reinforce those goals as a means of addressing the most pressing needs of our community.

By being proactive in identifying opportunities that advance its mission, the Foundation focuses on making a measurable impact on high priority issues with its available funding and additional resources. The Foundation envisions a countywide health and human services delivery system that is robust and thriving with a network of providers capable of achieving the greatest impact on the growing and changing needs of our Lake County neighbors. With an emphasis on partnership and collaboration, while using innovation and organizational strength as its compass, the system will foster transformational change in communities across Lake County.

MISSION

The mission of The Lake County Community Foundation is to improve the quality of life of residents of the county by providing civic leadership, promoting collective philanthropy and partnering with our grant recipients. In pursuit of this mission, we act as a:

- **CATALYST**—by mobilizing community leadership to find and fund collaborative, innovative approaches to address Lake County's most pressing issues.
- **CONNECTOR**—by maintaining in-depth knowledge of the nonprofit sector, sharing it with others and building partnerships that strengthen our community.
- **GRANT MAKER**—by leveraging the power of collective philanthropy to pool charitable dollars to achieve the greatest possible impact.
- **STEWARD**—by acting as a trusted guide of donor resources and partnering with community-minded individuals, families and organizations to ensure a legacy for charitable solutions.

VALUES

The Lake County Community Foundation, honoring a century old tradition of community philanthropy, awards grants to nonprofit organizations that are addressing the most pressing needs of residents in our county. As a community leader and steward of donor resources, the Foundation believes that large scale social change requires broad, cross-sector coordination versus isolated intervention. Recognizing that successful grant making is rooted in clearly articulated values, the Foundation envisions a community that models:

- Community & Connectedness
- Civic Leadership
- Equity
- Integrity
- Innovation
- Opportunity

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The Foundation believes that the diversity of our community is a fundamental strength of our region. Our mission to improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable residents of Lake County is best fulfilled when we embrace diversity as a value and a practice. We define diversity to include (but not limited to) age, disability status, economic circumstance, ethnicity, gender, race, religion and sexual orientation.

The Lake County Community Foundation requires all applicants to either have an adopted diversity statement or to adopt the Foundation's [Diversity Statement](#) if there is not one in place. Additionally, the Foundation asks that applicants provide demographic data on board and staff as well as clients/beneficiaries of the projects. The Foundation believes that the board and staff composition of grant recipients should reflect the diversity and demographics of the community being served and include diversity among its leadership at the board and senior staff levels to ensure variation of perspective across all decision-making levels. For this reason, the Foundation does take into consideration the demographic make-up of the board, staff and clients of a grant applicant as an important evaluation criterion.

Questions about the Foundation's grant making or application process may be directed to Emily at Emily@lakecountycf.org or 847-377-0520 X24.