



Northern New York Community Foundation

Grant Guidelines

We're pleased you are considering applying for a grant from the Northern New York Community Foundation. Please review the information below before applying to determine whether your organization and project are a strong fit and to ensure you are prepared to submit a competitive application.

These guidelines are intended to clarify our grantmaking approach, priorities, and application process. They are not exhaustive, and funding decisions may fall outside of them based on community need or donor intent.

How Community Foundation Grants Work

The Northern New York Community Foundation awards grants that strengthen communities in Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence counties by investing charitable resources in local organizations, programs, and initiatives that address community needs and create lasting impact. Our grantmaking is guided by community priorities, donor intent, and a commitment to improving quality of life across Northern New York.

As a community foundation, we steward charitable funds entrusted to us by donors. Grant decisions are made with careful attention to purpose, planning, and community benefit. Funding supports both established organizations and emerging initiatives with demonstrated potential for impact.

About Our Grant Programs

Grant program applications are accepted quarterly through the Community Foundation's online grant portal. Each grant program is structured around specific priorities and funding goals. Applicants should review program guidelines carefully before applying, as they define eligibility, funding levels, and requirements.

Eligibility is generally limited to qualified nonprofit organizations located in and serving Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence counties. Municipalities and school districts may be eligible for projects that enhance community quality of life and fall outside typical public funding responsibilities. Additional eligibility requirements may apply by program.

Grant amounts vary based on available funding, program priorities, and the scope of the proposed project. Requests are evaluated based on the scale and complexity of the work, the organization's capacity to effectively manage and implement the grant, the anticipated community impact, and the likelihood that outcomes will be sustained beyond the grant period.

Choosing Your Priority Project

While funding decisions are guided by specific program priorities, the Community Foundation most often provides grant awards for:

- Project support – Defined programs or initiatives addressing community need
- Capacity building – Strengthening organizational systems, leadership, or effectiveness
- Seed funding – Early-stage support for new or emerging initiatives
- Capital support – Facilities, infrastructure, or equipment (when aligned with priorities)
- Collaborative initiatives – Multi-organization efforts addressing shared goals

Applicants should apply with focus and discipline. Submitting multiple applications, whether for the same or a different project, is discouraged. Organizations should identify their highest-priority project and apply to the most appropriate opportunity. A helpful test is: *If your organization could receive only one Community Foundation grant this year, which project would it be?* This approach strengthens clarity, alignment, and competitiveness. Applicants are also encouraged to coordinate internally so that submissions reflect a unified organizational strategy.

Organizations and projects located outside our service area, projects already completed, or those not aligned with program priorities are generally not considered.

All required grant reports must be submitted before applying for additional funding.

Timing and Grant Agreement Process

Applications must be submitted by the posted deadlines. Funding decisions follow a structured review process, including staff evaluation, committee input, and final board approval after the deadline.

If a project requires immediate funding, the Community Foundation's grant programs may not be an appropriate fit.

Awarded funds are generally to be used within one year of the award date. Once approved, grantees enter into a formal grant agreement. Funds are released after the agreement is executed and in accordance with its terms.

The grant agreement includes a space to enter the "date funds needed." The date you enter should be one that gives plenty of time for checks to be processed and sent out by the Community Foundation and for your organization to process funds before purchases are made. Funding is not provided on a reimbursement basis.

Stewardship and Acknowledgment

Successful grantmaking depends on strong partnerships with organizations that demonstrate clarity, accountability, and follow-through. Grant recipients are expected to acknowledge the Northern New York Community Foundation and the granting fund, when applicable, in a manner appropriate to the project. Recognition helps communicate impact, strengthen public awareness, and honor the donors who make this work possible. For more steps on how to publicly acknowledge grant awards, please access "Communicating Your Grant" in the Nonprofits menu on our website. You may also download our logo and our "Logo and Brand Standards Guide" from our website.

All grant recipients are required to submit a written report of the project after grant funding has been exercised. The evaluation should detail how funding was expended and explain project results.

Community Foundation staff are available to conduct site visits and assist with the evaluation process. Please note that the Community Foundation reserves the right to examine and audit the expenditure of grant awards in accordance with the grantee's initial application. Any unused portion of the grant must be returned to the Community Foundation in a timely manner.

We're here to help!

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