



2020 GRANT MAKING GUIDELINES

**** New in 2020 ****

Please note the following important changes to our competitive grant making cycle and process:

- Split the Foundation's one competitive cycle into two cycles with new timelines
- New Leadership Development priority area
- Simplified email application process
- New application assistance

Read more about these changes below ...

Grant Priorities

The Lake County Community Foundation accepts proposals that fall within its five funding priority areas:

Proactive Grant Making Strategy

** Please note that 2020 will be a rest year for the proactive strategy and the Foundation will neither invite nor accept proposals for this priority area. In 2021, the Foundation anticipates launching another multi-year initiative with a new funding focus. Applications for funding within this priority area are made by invitation only.*

In 2017, the Foundation introduced a new community investment strategy that combines strategic community leadership with intentional organizational investment—ultimately leading to a more streamlined coordination of countywide efforts. In this inaugural initiative (2017-2019), grant making within this priority area encompassed a strategic focus on improving access to affordable, nutritious food in the county. Two partners, Northern Illinois Food Bank and Liberty Prairie Foundation, were selected to collaboratively streamline the food system and increase access to healthy food in underserved communities. The 2019 grant cycle marked the last round of funding for this focus area.

Addressing Basic Human Needs (BHN) Priority Area

Basic Human Needs (BHN) Cycle Timeline	
January 20, 2020	BHN cycle opens; application posted to LCCF website
March 2, 2020	BHN applications due by midnight via email
March – mid-May 2020	Foundation’s due diligence process
May 22, 2020	Grant awards determined by LCCF board of directors
May 25, 2020	Grant recipients notified
June 10, 2020	Grant agreements due
Week of June 20, 2020	Grant awards disbursed

The Foundation continues to support organizations that work collaboratively to address the most basic needs of our residents. The Foundation accepts proposals for both program/project based initiatives and for general operating support. We believe Lake County’s basic human needs can be met when *everyone* has equitable access to:

- Affordable, nutritious food
- Affordable, comprehensive health care
- Safe and affordable housing
- Transportation
- Education and workforce opportunities
- Immigration and legal support services

Funding Level Guidance
 Proposals for BHN priority area
 are considered:
Up to \$20,000
 *Up to 10 grants

The Foundation’s goal is to invest in work that allows people who are disproportionately affected by lack of access to obtain support in several areas of extreme need through wrap around services, a continuum of care, or close collaborations with other providers.

General operating grants will be prioritized for work that:

- Supports new and innovative approaches to meet basic human needs
- Addresses barriers to access of basic services and benefits for the most vulnerable residents of Lake County
- Addresses otherwise unmet basic needs as the only service provider in the area

Early Childhood Education, Animal Welfare and Leadership Development Priority Areas

Early Childhood, Animal Welfare and Leadership Development Cycle Timeline	
July 15, 2020	Applications open; posted to Foundation’s website
Sept. 1, 2020	Applications due by midnight via email
September-October	Foundation’s due diligence process
Dec. 2, 2020	Grant awards determined by LCCF board of directors
Dec. 4, 2020	Grant recipients notified
Dec. 10, 2020	Grant agreements due
Week of Dec. 20	Grant awards disbursed

Supporting Early Childhood Education

Organizations that promote early childhood education (prenatal-age 5) are 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 the most vulnerable residents of Lake County
- Addresses otherwise unmet needs as the only service provider in the area

Funding Level Guidance
 Proposals for Early Childhood priority area are considered:
Up to \$10,000
 *Up to 2 grants

Animal Welfare

Organizations that attend to the needs of animals 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:

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

Funding Level Guidance

Proposals for Animal Welfare priority area are considered:

Up to \$5,000

*Up to 3 grants

Leadership Development — *New*

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 who have 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 to quality programming
- Builds the overall capacity of the county's nonprofit sector

Funding Level Guidance

Proposals for Leadership Dev. priority area are considered:

Up to \$5,000

*Up to 5 grants

Criteria for Evaluation

All grant requests must be submitted via email to Emily Weber at emily@lakecountycf.org for review by Foundation staff. Applications will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Request aligns with the Foundation's mission and values
- Request responds to a high priority need based on current Lake County specific data
- Strong, documented partnerships currently in place
- Request has potential to leverage other resources/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 method for tracking outcomes

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
- 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
- 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
- Organizations that have an active grant for the same project with The Chicago Community Trust

Grant Making Process — *New*

The Foundation has historically had one annual competitive grant making cycle to encompass all of its priority areas. **New in 2020, the competitive cycle will be split into two cycles—a Basic Human Needs cycle in the winter (similar timeline as in years past) and a cycle for our Early Childhood Education, Animal Welfare and Leadership Development priority areas in mid-summer.**

All grants are reviewed on an annual basis and eligible organizations may receive funding for three consecutive years following staff and board review, then are required to take a rest year.

**** The Foundation will no longer use the Grant Central system in its grant making process. Instead, applicants will use a Word document application and will submit it via email. ****

Technical Assistance

The Foundation will provide one technical assistance workshop in the winter of 2019/2020 for the Basic Human Needs Cycle and one in the summer of 2020 for the Early Childhood Education, Animal Welfare and Leadership Development priority areas cycle.

New — Staff will provide a brief webinar to help walk applicants through some of the changes to the process and to address common mistakes on the application.

** Dates are TBD. Please stay tuned to our [newsletter](#) and [social media](#) for the most updated information. **

Background

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 will focus on making measurable impact on high priority issues with its limited 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 the most vulnerable residents of the county. 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.

Foundation Mission

The mission of The Lake County Community Foundation is to improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable 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.

Foundation 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 and Connectedness**
- **Civic Leadership**
- **Integrity**
- **Innovation**
- **Opportunity**

For additional information about the Foundation's values, visit: <https://www.lakecountycf.org/about-lccf/>.

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 adopt the Foundation's [Diversity Statement](#) or have a similar policy adopted by their boards. 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.