



2021 Grant Making Guidelines The Lake County Community Foundation

** New in 2021 **

2021 BASIC HUMAN NEEDS GRANT CYCLE: LCCF board and staff recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial effect on our county’s nonprofit sector as our health and human service partners have faced increased demand for services and setbacks to their budgets with cancelled fundraisers, donor fatigue and more. In response, the Foundation will provide flexible, general operating grants for its Basic Human Needs priority area. Thus, LCCF is implementing two significant changes to its 2021 Basic Human Needs Competitive Grant Cycle:

1. The Foundation will only accept general operating funding requests. No project-based requests will be accepted for this cycle.
2. The Foundation will implement a letter of inquiry (LOI) process for the 2021 Basic Human Needs Competitive Grant Cycle (an LOI will not be required for our Fall Competitive Grant Cycle). Please see below for additional information about this change to our process.

Please also note that like last year, the Foundation will have two competitive cycles: one for Basic Human Needs in January and one mid-year that encompasses our Early Childhood Education, Leadership Development and Animal Welfare priority areas.

Grant Priorities

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

Addressing Basic Human Needs (BHN) Priority Area

The Foundation continues to support organizations that work collaboratively to address the most basic needs of our residents. **With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the significant rise in need across the county, the Foundation will provide flexible general operating grants for the 2021 Basic Human Needs Competitive Grant Cycle. The Foundation will prioritize organizations meeting the most basic needs of our neighbors during this challenging time for so many in our county.**

Grant requests of a minimum of \$10,000 to a maximum of \$20,000 will be considered.

Funding Level Guidance

Proposals for BHN priority area are considered:

\$10,000 - \$20,000

*Up to 10 grants

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

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:

- 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

Basic Human Needs Competitive Grant Cycle Process

NEW - For the 2021 Basic Human Needs Competitive Grant Cycle, the Foundation is implementing a letter of inquiry (LOI) process. The 1-page LOI template will require organizations to briefly summarize their funding request and expected outcomes. The LOI will be available on the LCCF [website](#) by **Jan. 6** and will be due via email by **Jan. 29**. LCCF will then review submitted LOIs and will select 10-15 organizations to invite to submit full proposals. Full proposals will be due by **March 5** via email.

Basic Human Needs (BHN) Cycle Timeline	
January 6, 2021	BHN cycle opens; <i>NEW</i> Letter of Inquiry posted to LCCF website
January 29, 2021	BHN Letter of Inquiry due by 5 p.m. via email
February 12, 2021	Organizations invited to submit a full proposal will be notified via email
March 5, 2021	Full proposal due by 5 p.m. via email
March – mid-May 2021	Foundation’s due diligence process
May 19, 2021	Grant awards determined by LCCF Board of Directors
May 20, 2021	Grant recipients notified
June 10, 2021	Grant agreements due
Week of June 20, 2021	Grant awards disbursed

Early Childhood Education, Animal Welfare and Leadership Development Priority Areas

The Foundation's **Fall Competitive Grant Cycle** encompasses its Early Childhood Education, Leadership Development and Animal Welfare priority areas. Applications for **both** general operating support and project-based requests will be accepted. This cycle does **not** include an LOI process – the cycle follows the Foundation's typical full application process. The application for this cycle, however, will be shortened to help streamline and simplify the process for applicants.

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

Leadership Development

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 Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) leaders to quality programming
- Builds the overall capacity of the county's nonprofit sector

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:

- Cultivates 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 Early Childhood priority area are considered:

Up to \$10,000

*Up to 3 grants

Funding Level Guidance

Proposals for Leadership Dev. priority area are considered:

Up to \$5,000

*Up to 4 grants

Funding Level Guidance

Proposals for Animal Welfare priority area are considered:

Up to \$5,000

*Up to 5 grants

Early Childhood, Animal Welfare and Leadership Development Fall Grant Cycle Timeline	
July 12, 2021	Applications open; posted to Foundation's website
August 20, 2021	Applications due by 5 p.m. via email
September-October	Foundation's due diligence process
November 17, 2021	Grant awards determined by LCCF board of directors
November 19, 2021	Grant recipients notified
December 10, 2021	Grant agreements due
Week of December 20, 2021	Grant awards disbursed

Criteria for Evaluation

All grant requests must be submitted via email to Emily Weber at emily@lakecountycf.org for review by Foundation staff, the LCCF Grants and Community Outreach Committee and the Board of Directors. 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
- 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
- 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 Overview

The Foundation has two competitive grant cycles:

1. Basic Human Needs Grant Cycle - *opens in January 2021*
2. Fall Grant Cycle (Early Childhood Education, Leadership Development and Animal Welfare priority areas) – *opens in mid-July 2021*

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.

As described above, the Foundation has implemented a new letter of inquiry process for its Basic Human Needs Competitive Grant Cycle – see *Basic Human Needs section for details and timeline*

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

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 [here](#).

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.