



THE LAKE COUNTY  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
Growing Philanthropy. Building Community.

**2021 Basic Human Needs Grant Cycle  
Request for Proposals**

*Improving the Quality of Life of the Most Vulnerable Residents of Lake County*

RFP release date:	January 6, 2021
Letter of Inquiry deadline:	January 29, 2021
Application deadline: (for invited applicants)	March 5, 2021
Grant decision date:	May 19, 2021

## Introduction

The Lake County Community Foundation is Lake County, Illinois' community foundation, built by civic leaders in our community to improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable residents. Since 2003, generous donors have pooled their charitable resources with the Foundation to be transformed through careful stewardship and deep community knowledge into positive local impact.

Now in its 17<sup>th</sup> year of giving and impact in Lake County, the Foundation has implemented a community investment strategy that combines strategic community leadership with intentional organizational investment—ultimately leading to a more streamlined coordination of countywide efforts.

## Grant Priorities

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. **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.** 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 our [2021 Grant Making Guidelines](#) 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.

**\*\*\* Please read our [2021 Grant Making Guidelines](#) prior to completing the LOI. \*\*\***

## Addressing Basic Human Needs

The Foundation continues to support organizations that work collaboratively to address the most basic needs of our residents. 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:**

- **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**

**Problem Statement/Overview**

Lake County, Illinois, while boasting a number of assets, continues to endure many of the challenges associated with population growth and demographic shifts. The wealthiest county in the state of Illinois, it is a county that has also seen the poverty rate grow to near 9%. The suburbanization of poverty into Lake County, as indicated in studies completed by the Brookings Institution and Dr. Scott Allard during his time at University of Chicago, has created barriers for the most vulnerable residents of the county who have little or no access to the services they need to achieve self-sufficiency and has stressed a safety net of providers that is fragile and ill-equipped to solely meet the growing demand for assistance.

The Lake County Community Foundation (the Foundation) asserts that the quality of life of Lake County can be improved through an earnest effort to bring 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.

**Letters of Inquiry in response to this RFP are due by 5 p.m. on January 29, 2021. Applicants invited to submit a full proposal will be notified by February 12, 2021 and applications will be due by 5 p.m. on March 5, 2021. To apply, visit the Foundation’s website to find the letter of inquiry [here](#).**

**Outcomes Sought**

The Foundation seeks to make a measurable impact on high priority issues in Lake County with the following desired results:

- A more robust and collaborative nonprofit sector that leverages relationships, technology and opportunities to more effectively and efficiently serve more residents in need.
- Enhanced public-private partnerships that include government, businesses, corporations, schools, nonprofits and philanthropy working together to advance major initiatives that will have a transformational impact on our community.
- Community leadership efforts and grant making encourage additional investments for continuation and sustainability.

#### **Eligible Applicants and Projects:**

- 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.
- 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.
- Organizations with a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion for their governance, staffing and populations served; and explicit adherence to non-discriminatory practices in the hiring of staff or in providing services on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin or disability.
- Organizations with successful track records in achieving results to address the needs of vulnerable Lake County residents.

#### **Evaluation Criteria**

Incomplete proposals will not be considered. Proposals for grants must answer questions and include a narrative in response to the questions posed in the application. Grant proposals will be evaluated using the following rating 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

#### **\*Special note on diversity, equity and inclusion**

The Foundation believes that the diversity of our community is a fundamental strength of our county and region. Our mission to improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable residents 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 grantees should reflect the diversity and demographics of the clients/community being served and include diversity among its leadership at the board and senior staff levels to ensure the diverse perspectives needed at the 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 proposal evaluation criterion.

Applicants are encouraged to provide rationale or an action plan to address lack of diversity in their organization.

**Total Awards**

The Foundation anticipates awarding up to 10 grants under this RFP. Awards may range from **\$10,000 to \$20,000** per grant. All grants will be for one year.

**NEW - Application and Selection Process:**

1. Applicants are required to submit a letter of inquiry by **Jan. 29, 2021**. Organizations invited to move forward in the due diligence process by submitting a full proposal will be notified by **Feb. 12, 2021**. Full proposals will be due by **March 5, 2021**. The application and additional information can be found on our website [here](#).
2. Due diligence may include:
  - a. Site visits
  - b. Phone calls to fiscal agent and/or partners
  - c. Requests for additional information and/or documentation
  - d. Meetings with co-investors, partners, coalition members
3. The Foundation’s Board of Directors will make final grant decisions on **May 19, 2021**. Applicants will be notified of the Board’s decision by **May 20, 2021**.

Basic Human Needs (BHN) Cycle Timeline	
January 6, 2021	BHN cycle opens; <i>NEW</i> Letter of Inquiry posted to LCCF <a href="#">website</a>
<b>January 29, 2021</b>	<b>BHN Letter of Inquiry due by 5 p.m. via email</b>
February 12, 2021	Organizations invited to submit a full proposal will be notified via email
<b>March 5, 2021</b>	<b>Full proposal due by 5 p.m. via email</b>

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
<b>June 10, 2021</b>	<b>Grant agreements due</b>
Week of June 20, 2021	Grant awards disbursed

**Evaluation, Monitoring and Grant Recipient Learning Activities:**

Grant recipients are expected to meet the Foundation’s requirements for the submission of financial and narrative reports, including an interim progress report and final grant report.

In an effort to further the overall priorities of the Foundation, inform our future grant making and contribute to larger field-building objectives, grant recipients may be asked to participate in periodic meetings to share information on project activities and best practices, as well as participate in research-based evaluations.

**Questions**

For questions regarding the Basic Human Needs RFP or grant application, please contact Emily Weber, Manager of Community Leadership & Investment at [emily@lakecountycf.org](mailto:emily@lakecountycf.org).