



THE LAKE COUNTY
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
Growing Philanthropy. Building Community.

**2021 Fall Grant Cycle Request for Proposals
Leadership Development, Early Childhood Education &
Animal Welfare Priority Areas**

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

RFP release date:	July 12, 2021
Application deadline:	Aug. 20, 2021
Grant decision date:	Nov. 17, 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.

Grant Priorities

**For more information about our grant making priorities, guidelines and timelines, visit [HERE](#).*

Leadership Development

Organizations that are working to support emerging leaders in Lake County's nonprofit sector are invited to apply for grants made through the Foundation's new Leadership Development priority area. 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 to quality programming
- Builds the overall capacity of the county's nonprofit sector

For more information about this priority area, click [HERE](#).

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

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:

- Drives new and innovative approaches to support animal welfare in Lake County
- Addresses otherwise unmet 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 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 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.

*** Applications to this RFP are due by 5 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 20, 2021. To apply, click [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.
- 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 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 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

Please refer to the following funding level guidelines when crafting your application:

- Leadership Development: Up to 5 grants ranging from \$1,000-\$5,000 per grant.
- Early Childhood Education: Up to 3 grants ranging from \$1,000-\$10,000 per grant.
- Animal Welfare: Up to 5 grants ranging from \$1,000-\$5,000 per grant.

All grants will be for one year.

Application and Selection Process:

1. Applicants are required to submit a full proposal via e-mail to Emily Weber (emily@lakecountycf.org) as a response to the RFP. The proposal can be found on our website [here](#).
2. All proposals must be submitted by **5 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 20, 2021.**
3. Foundation staff will make a determination about the necessary proposal review process. Due diligence may include:
 - a. Site visits (may be done virtually or in person)
 - 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
4. The Foundation's Board of Directors will make final grant decisions on **Nov. 17, 2021**. All applicants will be notified of the Board's decision by **Nov. 19, 2021**.

Evaluation, Monitoring and Grant Recipient Learning Activities:

Grant recipients will be 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 Fall Cycle RFP or grant application, please contact Emily Weber, Manager of Community Leadership & Investment at emily@lakecountycf.org.