

Mini Grants

Purpose and Process

Revised 1/8/2024

The mission of the Charlevoix County Community Foundation (C3F) is to enhance the quality of life for all citizens of Charlevoix County, now and for generations to come. The Community Foundation helps people make a difference close to home by accepting contributions of all sizes. Each year, the Community Foundation makes grants to organizations, schools, and municipalities to make positive change in Charlevoix County.

What is the purpose of Mini Grants?

Mini Grants are designed to fund projects that are small in scale, meet an unanticipated need or opportunity, help an organization with capacity building, or fall outside the timeline for our other responsive grant cycles. Capacity building Mini Grants provide funds to nonprofits, supporting them to carry out their missions more effectively. With quicker turnaround times and smaller grant amounts, our Mini Grants can have a meaningful impact on a broader range of nonprofits serving Charlevoix County.

Eligible applicants include:

- 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organizations
- All units of government
- All educational institutions (preschool through college)
- Organizations described above that serve Charlevoix County residents
- Organizations that do not discriminate in hiring of staff or the provision of services

Eligible organizations must be current with follow ups for all previous grant awards from C3F and be in good standing with the IRS.

When is the application deadline?

There is a rolling deadline for Mini Grants, so applications are accepted at any time throughout the year. The simple application is available annually, starting in early January, at www.c3f.org. Applicants must first discuss their proposal with a C3F staff member to gain access to the application.

What kinds of projects or programs are most likely to receive grant funding?

Mini Grants are designed to fund projects that are small in scale, meet an unanticipated need or opportunity, help an organization with capacity building, or fall outside the timeline for our other responsive grant cycles.

Successful requests may include any of the following characteristics: demonstrate collaboration, address new needs or try new approaches for existing needs, encourage people to help themselves, focus on prevention of problems, build capacity of an organization, and/or avoid duplication of services.

Mini Grant proposals will additionally be evaluated on the following specific criteria:

- Organization's impact and relevance in the community they serve
- Organizational capacity (leadership, staffing, planning, etc.), and solvency
- Degree to which funds will help strengthen the organization and/or the community the organization serves
- Duration of impact in the community served

What kinds of grants are generally not funded?

The Community Foundation's grant cycles generally do not fund annual fundraising campaigns, political campaigns, deficit spending, sectarian projects, or services normally supported by tax dollars. Additionally, requests that fit best in an organization's operating budget are less favorable in this cycle, especially for tax supported applicants.

When will grant funding decisions be announced?

C3F staff will generally notify grant applicants within a two-week period from the time the application is submitted.

All grant applications require a cash contribution. How much is necessary?

It depends on the topic and scope of the project, but the expectation is that nonprofit partners will contribute to the budget of the project or program.

What size grants are available in the Mini Grants Cycle?

This cycle considers requests from \$250 to \$1,500. The request size should reflect the organization's need for the project or program. Donor Advisors may also decide to contribute through their Donor Advised Funds. Community Foundation staff can provide additional guidance and information, if needed. A total of \$20,000 is available, annually for Mini Grants, starting in January.

Are there any other requirements?

- The governing board of the organization is responsible for appropriate use of funds and project implementation.
- Applicants must be current with follow ups for all previous grants in order to apply.
- Proposals from faith-based organizations must address community needs and
 - Have a clearly demonstrated public benefit
 - Be fully accessible to all people regardless of religious beliefs and lifestyle choices
 - May NOT proselytize, (i.e. require anything in return for services provided. Examples: attending services or prayer groups and/or volunteering, etc.)

What happens after the award?

The grant period is six months. A follow up summary is required to be completed once the grant work has been done and the grant award spent, or within 6 months of the grant award, whichever comes first. Options for follow up will be outlined more specifically when a grant is awarded. If the grant work is delayed or cannot be completed within the time period, the organization's representative should call the Community Foundation.

How to Apply for a Mini Grant

Step 1: Contact Ashley Cousens to discuss your eligibility. If your organization's need is a good fit for a Mini Grant, you will receive an access code for the online grant application. To get started, [use this link to schedule time directly on Ashley's calendar.](#)

Step 2: Visit www.c3f.org to log on to the online grant application (“Accepting Applications” link for the Mini Grant Cycle).

- If you have an account already, you may log on and proceed to the application using your access code.
- If you do not already have an account, you will need to create one (each user needs their own username (email address) and password) before proceeding to the application using the access code. The user who starts the application has editing rights for the application going forward. This person can invite others to contribute to the application once started.

Step 3: Complete the online grant application. You may save your work and return at any point prior to submitting your application. The application can be shared with others who may be sharing the responsibility of writing the grant proposal and completing the application. To utilize this feature, click on “collaborate” at the top of the application and enter the email address of the person needing access. Contact Ashley Cousens if you need help troubleshooting this feature. Once you submit your application, you will receive immediate confirmation via email. You may be contacted with further clarification questions regarding your application and/or eligibility.

If Funded...

Step 1: The Community Foundation will share news of the grant decisions within two weeks of you submitting the application. This will allow time for a decision to be made and for the C3F Board to approve the funding. The grantee organization will receive notification detailing the funding decision.

Step 2: Receive the grant check. The grant check will be mailed to your organization following the notification phone call from C3F staff. Usually, checks are mailed out within 2 weeks of the decision.

Step 3: We'd love to see your work in action! If you can accommodate a site visit with C3F staff, please indicate what would be most convenient in the form linked in your emailed award letter.

Step 4: Provide a summary of the grant work within one year of the grant award or whenever the work is completed. Grantees can choose to have a conversation with C3F staff – either during a site visit, or as a Zoom or phone call – or can complete 5-6 written questions in the online grant system. All grant recipients will need to complete a few short steps in the online system after their grant is complete, even if the bulk of the follow up takes place as a conversation. Providing photos is encouraged. More information about grant follow up will be provided to grant recipients at the time when a grant is awarded.

