



Youth Needs Cycle

Purpose and Process

Revised 12/23/2025

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 the Youth Needs Cycle?

This cycle aims to support top youth needs in Charlevoix County, and the organizations that make this work possible. The [Youth Advisory Committee](#) has identified priority areas for funding, based on the [Youth Needs Assessment](#). Individuals, couples, families, and businesses who advise funds at the Community Foundation (donor advisors) may choose to make grants through the cycle as well.

Eligible applicants include:

- 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organizations
- All units of government
- All educational institutions (preschool through college)
- Organizations described above that address Charlevoix County's youth needs
- 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?

The Youth Needs Cycle deadline is November 1 by 11:59 PM (Eastern), regardless of whether this is a weekday or weekend. The application will be available annually at www.c3f.org beginning in early September.

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

This cycle aims to support top youth needs in Charlevoix County, and the organizations that make this work possible. Every three years, the C3F YAC conducts a [Youth Needs Assessment](#) in which they survey their peers (7th-12th grades) to help identify the areas of need in Charlevoix County, according to youth themselves. Based on the results, the YAC

have outlined a grantmaking priority area and top concern areas of focus and will evaluate grants with these priorities in mind. All grant requests that impact youth will be considered for funding, regardless of priority or focus area. Youth Needs grant proposals are also evaluated based on need, target audience, impact on the youth population, and merit.

Top Youth Needs:

- **Grantmaking Priority Area - Youth Mental Health:** *With grant funds, the YAC seeks to increase access to mental health resources with a focus on anxiety, depression, and open conversation about mental health topics.*
- **Top Concerns – Academic Stress & School Atmosphere:** *Students are overwhelmed by homework, academic pressure, and imbalance between personal and school life. Bullying and belonging are real concerns impacting school atmosphere, with a call for stricter enforcement and adult intervention.*

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, and/or avoid duplication of services.

Youth Needs grant proposals will additionally be evaluated on the following specific criteria:

- Degree to which grant work supports youth needs in Charlevoix County
- 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
- Comprehensiveness of the proposal, including degree to which proposed activities are well-planned and address the need identified
- Duration of impact in the community served

Organizations should ask for what they need. The Community Foundation will limit neither the size nor the scope of a request. Rather, applicants will determine those factors for themselves, based on their needs. Successful grant proposals will clearly identify the need and make a strong case for the proposed activities or course of action in relation to the need(s). The YAC review committee will prioritize grants requests that score best on the criteria listed above and consider alignment with a priority area/top area of concern.

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.

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 Youth Needs Cycle?

This cycle encourages grants of all sizes. The request size should reflect the organization's need. Donor Advisors may also decide to contribute through their Donor Advised Funds. Community Foundation staff can provide additional guidance and information, if needed.

How does the Community Foundation make grant decisions for the Youth Needs Cycle?

The Youth Advisory Committee will review all grant applications and supplemental materials. Additionally, some applicants may need to attend an interview with the YAC based on the extent to which the request aligns with a priority or focus area. Selected interview applicants should prepare for a 10-minute interview focusing on the application and allowing questions from the committee.

The YAC will recommend funding to the Board of Trustees. The Community Foundation will also share these opportunities with donor advisors, who may choose to make grants through the cycle.

When will grant funding decisions be announced?

Community Foundation staff will notify grant applicants following approval from the Board of Trustees in early December.

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 one year. A follow up summary is required to be completed once the grant work has been done and the grant award spent, or within 12 months of the grant award, whichever comes first. 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 Youth Needs Grant

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

Step 2: Visit our [Apply for a Grant](#) page and click on the "Grant Portal" link.

- 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 your 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 Megan Havrilla DeHoog 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.

Step 4: Schedule an interview, if applicable. The date will be scheduled in advance, but applicants can sign up for specific time slots (first come, first served basis) on a date selected by the C3F.

Step 5: The Community Foundation will share your applications with donor advisors to encourage grant support.

If Funded...

Step 1: The Community Foundation will share news of the grant decisions by phone after the C3F Board of Trustees approves recommendations from the Advisory Committee. Applicant organizations will also receive an award letter 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 would like to have a site visit with C3F staff, please let us know. Your grant award letter will include a link to a form to fill out indicating what would work best for your organization.

Step 4: Provide a summary of the grant work within one year of the grant award or whenever the work is completed. All grant recipients will need to complete a few short steps in the online system after their grant is complete, even if a site visit has occurred. Providing photos is encouraged. More information about grant follow up will be provided to grant recipients at the time when a grant is awarded.

