



Urgent Needs Cycle

Purpose and Process

Revised 12/23/25

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 Urgent Needs Cycle?

The purpose of the Urgent Needs Cycle is to offer all eligible nonprofit partners the opportunity to apply for support through the Community Foundation to help friends and neighbors in greatest need. 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 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 Urgent Needs grants, so applications are accepted at any time throughout the year. The application will be made available annually in early January and will be accepted at any point until December 15th of the current year. 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?

The Urgent Needs Cycle aims to attract requests that are focused on helping to meet individual needs of people in Charlevoix County. Specifically, requests from organizations helping Charlevoix County residents access food, shelter, safety, healthcare, mental health

services, utility assistance, transportation, and other basic and urgent needs will be prioritized, along with capacity building support for organizations focused in these areas that will help to strengthen and/or improve delivery of services or outreach to people in need.

Examples of capacity building grants may include strategic or other planning activities, executive coaching, DEI training for inclusivity and/or growth of the organization, equipment, staffing, or activities that will increase or strengthen the delivery of or access to services or outreach to people in need.

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.

Urgent Needs grant proposals will additionally be evaluated on the following 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
- Comprehensiveness of proposal, including degree to which proposed activities are well-planned and address the need(s) identified
- Duration and directness of impact in the community served
- State of the community at time of request

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). Grant review committees will prioritize grant requests that score best on the criteria listed above.

What kinds of grants are generally not funded?

The Community Foundation's Urgent Needs Cycle generally does 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 Urgent Needs Cycle?

This cycle encourages grants of all sizes. 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 \$50,000 is available, annually, for Urgent Needs grants, starting in January.

How does the Community Foundation make Urgent Needs Cycle grant decisions?

Community Foundation staff will review grant applications and recommend funding to the Board of Trustees. The Community Foundation may also share these opportunities with donor advisors, who may choose to make grant recommendations from their funds.

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.

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. 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 an Urgent Needs Grant

Step 1: Contact Ashley Cousens to discuss your eligibility. If your organization's need is a good fit for the Urgent Needs Grant cycle, 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 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 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.

Step 4: 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 always encouraged. More information about grant follow up will be provided to grant recipients at the time when a grant is awarded.

