

2018 GRANT MAKING GUIDELINES

Beginning with the Community Conversations in 2015, The Lake County Community Foundation carried out a comprehensive planning and evaluation process to transition its traditionally competitive grant making to a proactive and narrowed focus to achieve greater impact. As the Foundation enters its 15th year of giving and impact in Lake County, it has established a new approach that combines strategic community leadership with intentional organizational investment—ultimately leading to a more streamlined coordination of countywide efforts.

GRANT PRIORITIES

Grant making in pursuit of the Foundation’s mission and vision will encompass a strategic focus on improving access to affordable, nutritious food and addressing basic human needs. The Foundation will also consider applications for work that supports early childhood education and animal welfare.

1. Access to Affordable, Nutritious Food

** Applications for funding to support access to affordable, nutritious food will be made available by invitation only.*

Food Insecurity is defined as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life.

In Lake County, Illinois an estimated 68,650 individuals struggle with food insecurity¹. Of this population, children, seniors, African Americans and Latinos are disproportionately affected by lack of access to affordable, nutritious food. A number of communities across the county have school districts where more than 50% of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch. In the communities of North Chicago and Zion, the eligibility is as high as 85% and 90% respectively². Additionally, the nation’s current political climate has spurred significant concern regarding the stability of essential state and federal nutrition programs including:

- Senior Nutrition Programs
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs (NSLP)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

Healthy eating helps prevent high cholesterol and high blood pressure and can reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes³.

Grant funds are prioritized for organizations that have the capacity to:

- **Coordinate existing local efforts**

¹ Hunger in America 2014 – Special Report for Lake County, Illinois

² [National School Lunch Program Eligibility](#)

³ [Live Well Lake County – Community Health Improvement Plan 2016-2021 Strategic Issue 3](#)

- **Inform local food policy**
- **Promote and support local, sustainable food production**

2. 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**

3. Supporting 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**

4. 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:

- **Supports new and innovative approaches to support animal welfare in Lake County**

- **Addresses otherwise unmet needs as the only service provider in the area**

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

All grant requests must be submitted electronically via GrantCentral for review by Foundation staff. Applications will be evaluated using the following 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

Eligible Applicants

The Foundation considers applications from organizations that demonstrate success and sustainability with program goals and outcomes. Eligible organizations are:

- 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
- Non-discriminatory in the hiring of staff or in providing services on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin or disability

Funding Limitations

Grants **will not** be made for the following:

- Scholarships
- Individuals
- Sectarian purposes (programs that promote or require a religious doctrine)
- Support of single-disease oriented research, treatment or care
- The sole purpose of writing, publishing, producing or distributing audio, visual or printed material
- The sole purpose of conducting conferences, festivals, exhibitions or meetings
- Reducing operating deficits or liquidating existing debt
- Capital improvements/campaigns
- Endowment campaigns
- Political campaigns
- Sponsorship of events/fundraisers
- Memberships/dues
- Organizations that have an active grant for the same project with The Chicago Community Trust

ONLINE GRANT SYSTEM

The Foundation uses an online application system, GrantCentral, which is managed by its parent organization The Chicago Community Trust. Specific information about this system and directions on how to register your nonprofit organization can be found on the Foundation’s website:

<http://www.lakecountycf.org/apply/how-to-apply>.

GRANT MAKING PROCESS

The Foundation follows an annual process whereby eligible nonprofits may apply for funding. Multi-year grants may be available for organizations seeking funds to support access to affordable, nutritious food. Basic Human Needs, Early Childhood Education and Animal Welfare grants will be awarded annually. All grants are reviewed on an annual basis and eligible organizations may receive funding for 3 consecutive years following staff and board review. The Foundation’s process includes:

Step 1: Online registration and application.

Eligible agencies may apply for funding beginning **February 1, 2018.**

Step 2: Online submission of proposal.

All applications are due by **11:59 p.m. on Thursday, March 1, 2018.**

Step 3: Due diligence.

Following submission, proposals will be reviewed by staff and board of the Foundation during the months of **March – May 2018.**

Step 4: Grant decision.

The Foundation’s board of directors determines the final grant awards. **Decision: June 5, 2018.**

Step 5: Online reporting of outcomes.

Grant recipients are required to report on outcomes at the mid-term and end of the grant cycle.

2018 GRANT MAKING TIMELINE

Date	Timeline
February 1, 2018	Online application process opens
March 1, 2018	Grant applications due by midnight through GrantCentral
March – May 2018	Due diligence process
June 5, 2018	Grant awards determined by LCCF board of directors
June 6, 2018	Grant recipients notified
July 2, 2018	Grant agreements due
July 20, 2018	Grant awards disbursed

BACKGROUND

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

By being proactive in identifying opportunities that advance its mission, the Foundation will focus on making measurable impact on high priority issues with its limited available funding and additional

resources. The Foundation envisions a countywide health and human services delivery system that is robust and thriving with a network of providers capable of achieving the greatest impact on the growing and changing needs of the most vulnerable residents of the county. With an emphasis on partnership and collaboration, while using innovation and organizational strength as its compass, the system will foster transformational change in communities across Lake County.

FOUNDATION MISSION

The mission of The Lake County Community Foundation is to improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable residents of the county by providing civic leadership, promoting collective philanthropy and partnering with our grant recipients.

In pursuit of this mission we act as a:

- **CATALYST** – by mobilizing community leadership to find and fund collaborative, innovative approaches to address Lake County’s most pressing issues.
- **CONNECTOR** – by maintaining in-depth knowledge of the nonprofit sector, sharing it with others and building partnerships that strengthen our community.
- **GRANT MAKER** – by leveraging the power of collective philanthropy to pool charitable dollars to achieve the greatest possible impact.
- **STEWARD** – by acting as a trusted guide of donor resources and partnering with community-minded individuals, families and organizations to ensure a legacy for charitable solutions.

FOUNDATION VALUES

The Lake County Community Foundation, honoring a century old tradition of community philanthropy, awards grants to nonprofit organizations that are addressing the most pressing needs of residents in our county. As a community leader and steward of donor resources, the Foundation believes that large scale social change requires broad, cross-sector coordination versus isolated intervention.

Recognizing that successful grant making is rooted in clearly articulated values, the Foundation envisions a community that models:

- **Community and Connectedness**
- **Civic Leadership**
- **Integrity**
- **Innovation**
- **Opportunity**

For additional information about the Foundation’s values, please visit: <https://www.lakecountycf.org/about-lccf/>.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The Foundation believes that the diversity of our community is a fundamental strength of our region. Our mission to improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable residents of Lake County 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 grant recipients should reflect the diversity and demographics of the community being served and include diversity among its leadership at the board and senior staff levels to ensure variation of perspective across all 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 evaluation criterion.

Questions about the Foundation's grant making or online application system may be submitted by e-mail to: Maggie@lakecountycf.org.