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Special Project Grant Guidelines (Revised November 2025)

Application Deadlines: March 1 & October 1. Online application submission required.

What is the Special Project Grant?

The Community Foundation of St. Joseph County offers the Special Project Grant to assist public and other 501(c)(3) agencies in their efforts to serve community needs. For every \$1 raised by the chosen agency, the Community Foundation will match \$1.

Why a Challenge Grant?

Challenge grants work. Donors are more willing to give and often willing to give more if their contributions are matched by other funds. Used wisely, not-for-profit agencies will find challenge grants an excellent tool to raise the funds necessary to complete projects.

The following guidelines apply:

The project should benefit a significant constituency within the community. The agency must exhibit the ability to raise the required matching funds. Only cash gifts will be matched; future pledges and in-kind contributions do not meet the match requirement.

Areas of Interest

The Community Foundation encourages projects in the following areas (listed alphabetically):

- Community Development & Urban Affairs
- Health & Human Services
- Parks, Recreation, & Environment
- Youth & Education

***An important note regarding Arts & Culture requests:

Most arts & culture-related proposals should be submitted to the ArtsEverywhere Grants process (separate guidelines available). Only requests that are primarily health and human service oriented in nature, but that utilize the arts as a tool or method, should be submitted through this Special Project Challenge Grant process.

How does an organization apply for the Special Project Grant?

The Special Project Grant proposal deadlines are March 1 and October 1. Application materials must be submitted via the online application system: <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=cfsjc>.

Required Application Attachments: The following are required documents to be uploaded into the online application:

- Detailed Project Budget (Include revenue & expenses sources for proposed project only.)
- Current Board Roster with officers identified
- Income Statement or Profit & Loss Statement for most recently completed fiscal year (Audited if available).
- Balance Sheet or Statement of Financial Position for most recently completed fiscal year.
- IRS Determination Letter (Only required if not yet on file.)

NOTE: It is the responsibility of the grant-seeking organization to submit a complete request. Incomplete

requests run the risk of being declined without consideration. The letters of request will be reviewed by the Grants Committee and outstanding requests will be identified for further consideration. Site visits will be conducted at the Grants Committee's discretion. Agencies may be asked to submit additional information.

Notification and Announcement

The Grants Committee's recommendations are submitted to the Community Foundation's board of directors at the April and November meetings. Applicants are informed immediately thereafter regarding the status of their request. Announcement of the special project and grant award will be made by the Community Foundation. The chosen agency will have 12 months to meet pre-negotiated matching requirements.

Will Grants be Evaluated?

Yes. Grants will be evaluated to verify successful completion of the project as defined in the grant proposal and compliance with any conditions made at the time of the grant. Excellent evaluations will enhance the credibility of the recipient organization and their subsequent grant requests. The reverse is also true. Failure to carry out successfully the objectives detailed in your grant proposal may compromise your chances for future funding.

Capital Campaigns

Capital campaigns are considered eligible projects for the Special Project Grant process. If you are interested in submitting an application for a capital campaign, please contact Program staff prior to submission to discuss your project.

What Will the Community Foundation Generally Not Fund?

While the Community Foundation remains flexible in trying to meet community needs, in general, grants are not made to fund:

- Operating support for established programs
- Endowment campaigns
- Religious organizations for religious purposes
- Individuals directly
- Development or public relations activities (e.g. literature, videos, etc.)
- Retirement of debts
- Camperships
- Annual appeals or membership contributions
- Travel for bands, sports teams, classes, etc.
- Computers (unless presented as a necessary component of larger program or objective)
- Post-event or after-the-fact situations
- Annual or recurring events
- Organizations with less than two-years of operational history
- School projects or programs that do not directly benefit the larger community
- Organizations that received a Special Project Grant in the previous cycle

What Are the Priorities of the Community Foundation?

The Board has defined as the role and priorities of the Community Foundation:

- To promote organizations whose programs benefit the residents of St. Joseph County
- To assist existing agencies to better respond to the needs of the community
- To encourage and reward excellence in the not-for-profit field
- To maintain both a proactive focus for grants dollars and the ability to respond to creative ideas from grant seekers
- To promote innovative, collaborative efforts to improve the health and well-being of St. Joseph County residents
- To encourage programs that enhance cooperation and collaboration among institutions within the area