



**Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area**  
community foundation

## Community and Youth Grant Guidelines

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Established August 2025

Due for Review 2026

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The mission of the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation is to improve the quality of life for all people in Emmet County. Through strategic grantmaking, we support nonprofit organizations, schools, and local governments whose work aligns with our mission and values.

### Purpose of Our Community and Youth Grantmaking

Our grantmaking reflects the Community Foundation's values and our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging. We recognize that grantmaking carries an inherent power imbalance, and we seek to lessen it by listening and working in partnership with our grantees. We rely on our partners to share the needs they see in the community. We also recognize that community needs can change and require responsiveness and flexibility. The funding priorities below have been identified by the Foundation, but they are not exhaustive.

- Arts and culture
  - Promote the financial stability and organizational development for arts organizations
  - Keep the arts, cultural, and historical programs accessible, available and affordable
- Community and economic development
  - Support the enhancement of downtown areas
  - Support thriving, livable, and walkable communities

- Support housing solutions to make housing more accessible and affordable for low- and moderate-income households
- Education
  - Support for opportunities beyond provisions of state-mandated curriculum, for example: student clubs, athletics, performing arts, and after-school and summer programs
  - Support for career and technical education programs
  - Minor capital improvements that enhance student experience
  - Special initiatives that minimize education costs for low-income students
  - Class trips, senior parties, sports team travel grants, are not eligible
- Environment
  - Projects to protect and restore green spaces, shorelines, dune areas, water quality, and air quality
  - Environmental education for all ages
  - Promotion of comprehensive planning, priorities, and strategies to address environmental sustainability
- Health and human services
  - Support for basic needs, including food, shelter, home heating, healthcare, and childcare for low- and moderate-income households
  - Organizational support through capacity building to strengthen agencies
  - Support for at-risk populations such as seniors, women and children, and individuals with disabilities
- Recreation
  - Keep recreational activities available and affordable for community individuals and youth
  - School or community athletics and recreational or sports camps
  - Community parks, playgrounds, and trails
- Youth (non-education)
  - Early childhood care and education
  - Youth centers and out-of-school activities
  - Promote citizenship, leadership, and positive values
  - Priority will be given to projects that align with the most recent Youth Needs Assessment as conducted by the Youth Advisory Committee

The Community Foundation will consider the following types of requests:

- Organizational programming, including salaries or administrative expenses relevant to the program or project
- Capacity building
- Capital campaigns and smaller capital projects
- General operating support for staffing expansion, technology, communications, small capital items, materials, and supplies necessary to fulfill your mission

## **Eligible applicants include:**

- 501c3 nonprofit organizations.  
We welcome requests from organizations of all sizes, including small, new, or growing organizations. Nonprofits without 501c3 status may be eligible to apply with a fiscal sponsor.
- Governmental and educational institutions.  
Eligible grant recipients include local units of government, tribal nations, public and private schools, universities, and colleges.
- Faith-based organizations.  
We welcome requests from churches and faith-based organizations for programs supporting the broader community. Applications will not be accepted to advance a specific religious doctrine or for programs that require an individual to observe a specific faith. Programs must abstain from proselytizing, religious worship, instruction, or recruitment as a requirement of the program.
- Fiscal sponsorship.  
Organizations that do not have 501c3 status may apply through a fiscal sponsor for projects or programs that advance our areas of interest. Fiscal sponsors must meet the grantmaking eligibility requirements. Organizations that act as a fiscal sponsor for other projects not directly associated with the organization's programs may submit multiple proposals per cycle: one for their sponsored program and one for their internal program. Contact Foundation staff before proceeding with a fiscal sponsor application.

All applications must benefit residents of Emmet County.

## **What do we not fund?**

- Annual giving campaigns
- Support directly to individuals

- Religious programs that advocate specific religious doctrines or do not serve the broader community
- Services which are commonly recognized as government or school obligations
- Endowments
- Deficit funding or debt retirement, including operating expenses due to budget deficits or shortfalls

## **Application deadline and grant size**

Community and Youth grant applications are invited two times during the calendar year, with final applications due early March and early October.

Community and Youth grant proposals are accepted to support a wide variety of needs in Emmet County. The grant cycles are supported with our unrestricted Fund for the Community and Fund for Youth endowment funds, alongside a variety of field of interest funds that specifically support proposals aimed at the environment, seniors, youth in foster care, housing, human services, and youth after school.

The Community and Youth grant cycles encourage requests of all sizes. The request size should reflect the organization's need. Funding availability changes each year. Community Foundation staff can provide guidance on an appropriate request size based on available resources. On average, grant awards are about \$7,800.

## **Decision process**

Community grant applications are reviewed by the Grant Distribution Committee, while Youth grant applications are reviewed by the Youth Advisory Committee. These committees recommend funding to the Community Foundation's Board of Directors for final approval.

In support of a process that is fair and equitable, the grantmaking committees use an evaluation rubric to support funding decisions. Our committees evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

- Organizational strength and readiness
  - The applicant has an established presence within Emmet County and is known and trusted.
  - The applicant has the appropriate level of operational and financial stability to carry out the proposed project.
  - The proposed project builds the capacity of the organization to have an even greater impact on its future work.

- Project relevance and impact
  - There is evidence that a problem or opportunity exists and that benefitting populations want action on it. It doesn't duplicate existing efforts or disregard past lessons.
  - The project is timely. The applicant is the right organization and now is the right time to do it.
  - The proposed project benefits a significant number, or otherwise critical segment, of Emmet County residents.
  - The project benefits Emmet County residents (however many) in a truly meaningful way.
  - The proposed project supports systems change. It "moves the needle" on a complex or unresolved issue.
- Planning and feasibility
  - The proposed project is guided by clearly defined and readily measurable goals.
  - The application outlines a practical approach for achieving those goals, including a realistic timeline.
- Financial soundness and sustainability
  - The budget seems adequate for the proposed project. It is not padded with unrelated expenses, nor is it too modest.
  - The budget demonstrates commitment from other funding sources, ex: individual donations, business sponsorships, program fees, other grants, and/or the organization's own unrestricted resources. Note: matching dollars are not required, but the organization will receive points on the rubric for diverse funding sources.

## Trust-Based Grantmaking Practices

Trust-based philanthropy (TBP) is an approach that addresses the inherent power imbalance between funders, partners, and the community. A trust-based approach advances equity, shifts power, and builds mutually accountable relationships. Central to trust-based philanthropy are six grantmaking practices that the Community Foundation is working to incorporate into our grantmaking. The nature of this work is ever-evolving and responsive. We welcome dialogue and input from our grant partners to help us better advance our mission of improving lives for all.

TBP Practice	Our Actions
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<p>Give multi-year, unrestricted funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our strategic initiatives funding will award multi-year commitments for key priority areas.</li> <li>• We do not prohibit repeat funding for projects or programs; previous grant partners are invited to come back for funding.</li> <li>• We allow for general operating expenses to be included in project and program funding requests.</li> </ul>
<p>Do the homework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactively engage with partners to understand their work and needs in the community.</li> <li>• Conduct a Youth Needs Assessment every three years.</li> <li>• Actively monitor needs and community data.</li> </ul>
<p>Simplify and streamline paperwork</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold one-on-one calls with prospective applicants to discuss proposals and provide guidance on our grant process, helping them save time and prepare a more competitive application.</li> <li>• Simplify the final report process and allow in-person/site-visit final reports in place of written reports.</li> <li>• Continually review and assess our application to ensure we ask only for what is needed.</li> </ul>
<p>Be transparent and responsive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update grantmaking guidelines to be more clear and transparent about our process.</li> <li>• Provide flexibility with grant extensions as needed.</li> <li>• Respond urgently to crises that are emerging (COVID, ice storm, etc.)</li> </ul>
<p>Solicit and act on feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly survey grant partners for feedback to inform process improvements.</li> <li>• Provide multiple checkpoints for feedback and conversation (pre-grant call, conversations with unfunded applicants, survey, final report process, etc.)</li> </ul>

Offer support beyond the check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide high quality professional development opportunities such as Leadership Learning Lab, Certificate in Fundraising Management, and others based on grant partner needs.</li><li>• Serve as a thought-partner and connector to other resources and funders; connect partners with other nonprofits doing similar or related work.</li></ul>
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