

2012 Responsive Grants Program Guidelines

Philosophy

The Evanston Community Foundation funds projects that show promise of strengthening the community beyond the grant period. We respond to a broad range of community needs and opportunities. We strengthen the capacity of organizations to achieve long-term results. We encourage collaborative proposals that build and develop community resources and partnerships. We invest in Evanston's future through strategic initiatives that provide maximum impact.

Qualifications

- Any group or organization providing services to Evanston residents may apply for a grant.
- Applicants must either be 501(c)(3) organizations, schools, or government entities **or** must have a fiscal sponsor that qualifies as a tax-exempt organization under Sec. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- All proposals must address issues, concerns or opportunities in the Evanston community.

Types of Grants

- Program: continuing improvements to proven programs or projects that have shown long-term positive impact, new initiatives, pilot projects, capstone projects, or collaborations
- Capacity building: organizational initiatives that focus on building infrastructure to support an organization's long-term growth and development (e.g. strategic plans, board development, staff development, technology upgrades)

Funding Parameters

- We do not provide grants for general operating support; endowments; fund-raising events or sponsorship of events; appeals for specific religious purposes (though faith-based organizations may apply for projects benefitting the general community); or individuals. In general, we are unlikely to fund capital campaigns or one-time conferences, performances or events.
- The maximum grant award is \$15,000, however, most grants are awarded at a lower level of funding. Last year, the average grant was \$6,800.
- Grants may be awarded for partial or full funding of proposal requests.
- Grants are typically made for one year for the period July 1 to June 30. In some cases, a grant supporting a project that was funded in the previous year may be made in a second consecutive year if the applicant proposes enhancements to the project. On occasion, a grant supporting a project that was funded in the previous two years may be made in a third consecutive year if continuing enhancements are proposed. If a grant is made in a second or third consecutive year, funding will likely be at diminished levels after the first year of funding. In general, a grant supporting the same project will not be made beyond three consecutive years.
- Current and former grantees and/or previous applicants to any ECF grants program are eligible and encouraged to apply.
- All applicants will be notified of our decision by late May 2012.

Areas of Funding

The Foundation requests proposals addressing any aspect of the community including, but not limited to: **arts and culture, basic human needs, community development, early childhood education/early learning, education, environment, family support/counseling, health, housing, seniors, workforce development, or youth.**

The Foundation also invites proposals that align with the broad purposes of specific funds:

- **Arts in Community:** to support capacity-building initiatives for small and mid-sized arts organizations with budgets of at least \$25,000.
- **Boys:** to support the positive development of boys and young men.
- **Early learning and workforce development:** to support proposals that are consistent with the goals of the Foundation's Communityworks program, *Every Child Ready for Kindergarten, Every Youth Ready for Work*. Our current focus is on children from birth to age five and their parents.. Proposals particularly focused on workforce strategies for youth are also encouraged.
- **Environment:** to address general environmental purposes or global climate change through local initiatives that reduce Evanston's ecological footprint.
- **Women and girls:** to address the needs of women and girls in all stages of life.
- **Youth:** to support employment, recreational and educational opportunities for youth..

The Foundation also invites proposals supporting the goals of Evanston 150, a community-wide initiative of 10 visionary ideas in celebration of Evanston's 150th anniversary in 2013. The top 10 ideas can be found at <http://evanston150.org/>

Evaluation Criteria

The grants committee of the Evanston Community Foundation includes ECF board members, Northwestern University Dance Marathon co-chairs, and community representatives. The committee evaluates proposals according to the following criteria:

- Is the proposal consistent with the Foundation's mission and philosophy?
- Does the proposal address a significant concern, need or opportunity in Evanston?
- Are the objectives realistic and is the organization qualified to attain them?
- If the project is a collaboration or partnership with another organization, does the proposal address the support offered by each partner and the division of responsibilities among all partners?
- For capacity-building proposals, does the proposal fully explain how the organization will be strengthened and improved?
- If applicable, does the proposal address the recruitment of participants and how the project will be publicized?
- Is the project budget appropriate to the goals, objectives and expected outcomes? Will the project have long term impact? Is there a plan to sustain the project over time?
- Is the evaluation plan sufficient to track progress and determine success?
- Does the proposed project or investment in capacity provide the strongest value for Evanston relative to other funding opportunities?

Submission Process

Proposals must be submitted through eGrants.net. To create an account and application, visit <http://evanstoncf.egrant.net> **Please review formatting guidelines found in the narrative section of our grant application in eGrant before composing your document.** In addition to general information about the applicant organization, proposals must answer the following questions:

- *Project: Briefly describe the program or project you propose. (800 characters).*
- *Focus: What is the community challenge or opportunity you seek to address? If you are applying for a capacity-building grant, how will this grant be used to develop your organization? (2200 characters)*
- *Goals: What are the specific goals of this project? What is the projected timetable for implementation? (1200 characters)*

- *Audience: Who will be served by your program? How many participants are Evanston residents? How will you reach your intended audience and/or recruit participants? (800 characters)*
- *Methods: How will you use this grant? If you are collaborating with other agencies, please explain the collaboration and include documentation that confirms support and explains the responsibilities of each partner. (2800 characters)*
- *Qualifications: What resources, experience and/or expertise does your organization bring to the challenge your project seeks to address? (1200 characters)*
- *Evaluation: Describe the expected program outcomes and program evaluation methods. How will you know if the project is successful? What measures of progress would you expect to see by the midpoint of the grant (December 1)? (1200 characters)*
- *Sustainability: Will this project be sustained after the grant period ends? Will additional funding be needed for this project, during or after the grant period? (800 characters)*

Applicants must also submit:

- *A current annual operating budget (not required by schools or government agencies).*
- *A project budget and narrative including total cost of project, sources of other funding received to date and funding being solicited.*
- *A roster of board of directors including addresses and phone numbers.*
- *Documentation of relationships with collaborating partners.*

Submit 15 copies of the proposal:

- Each copy must include the complete eGrant application plus all required attachments.
- Please print on both sides of the pages.
- Please staple all pages together in the upper left-hand corner.
- Do not put copies into any kind of folder or binding.

Collateral materials that you believe will provide a helpful context for the review of your proposal may be submitted. Please provide only **one (1)** copy of each. Unlike the proposal itself, these materials may be submitted in folders or institutionally distinctive bindings, if you wish.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Monday, February 13, midnight: Completed proposals must be submitted through eGrant

Tuesday, February 14, noon: 15 copies of proposals must be received at:

**Evanston Community Foundation
1007 Church Street, Suite 108
Evanston, Illinois 60201**

Responsive Grants Calendar:

Grant Notification and Award Presentation: May 2012

Grantee Orientation: June 2012

Interim Progress Reports Due: December 2012

Site Visits with Grantees: December 2013 or earlier at staff discretion

Final Report Due: July 2013

**QUESTIONS? Contact Maureen Powers, Program Officer, at (847) 492-0990 or
powers@evanstonforever.org
or visit www.evanstonforever.org**