

2026 Community Cares Grant



About the Community Foundation of White County

The Community Foundation of White County exists to strengthen and transform our community by fostering charitable giving, philanthropic leadership, and collaborative solutions to local challenges. Through grantmaking, convening, and stewardship of permanent funds, we work alongside nonprofit organizations, schools, civic leaders, and residents to respond to evolving needs and invest in opportunities that help White County thrive today and for generations to come.

In recent years, the Foundation has placed a strong emphasis on data-informed decision-making and community collaboration. We have invested time and resources in gathering local data, listening to residents and nonprofit partners, and working across sectors to better understand the root causes of challenges facing our community. This work helps ensure that our grantmaking is not only responsive, but strategic — supporting efforts that are aligned, measurable, and positioned to create meaningful impact.

A Unique Opportunity for 2026–2027

The 2026 and 2027 Community Cares grant cycles represent a significant and exciting expansion of our traditional grantmaking efforts. With substantially more funding available than in years past, nonprofit partners may apply for **requests up to \$100,000**. This extraordinary opportunity allows the Foundation to deepen its investment in projects that address priority needs, strengthen organizational capacity, and contribute to lasting, community-wide outcomes.

With this increased investment comes a responsibility — and an opportunity — to be thoughtful and intentional. As a result, the Community Cares Grant guidelines and application process will be more involved than previous years, with an emphasis on:

- Clear community need and alignment with local data
- Collaboration and partnerships where appropriate
- Thoughtful project design
- Measurable outcomes and long-term impact

The application is designed not to create barriers, but to support applicants in developing strong, well-positioned proposals that can make the most of this special funding window.

Grant Kickoff Session

To support organizations as they explore this opportunity, the Foundation will host two Grant Kickoff Sessions. These informal sessions will share an overview of the grant cycle, highlight what's new this year, walk through the application process, and provide space to ask questions.

Wednesday, February 25 at 9:00 a.m. – Virtual

Thursday, February 26 at 9:00 a.m. – White County United Way
402 Tioga Rd, Monticello

All interested partners are encouraged to attend one of these sessions prior to submitting a Letter of Intent. Please reach out to Rachael to RSVP: rachael@cfwhitecounty.org or (574) 583-6911.

2026 Community Cares Grant Guidelines



Who may apply? Eligible applicants must:

- be a 501(c)(3) public charity, school, or governmental entity serving White County
- Demonstrate sound financial and organizational management
- Serve residents of White County without discrimination
- Have fulfilled all reporting requirements for any previous Community Foundation grants

What is funded? The Foundation is particularly interested in projects that address priority areas of community need, including child care, veteran support, mental health, and youth mentorship and development, but not limited to these areas, while also demonstrating innovative approaches to problem-solving, responsiveness to emerging opportunities, and meaningful collaboration among agencies and partners.

Examples of projects that may be considered include:

- **Start-up costs** for a new or expanded program or service (applicants should describe plans for future support and long-term sustainability)
- **One-time projects** that address a critical community need
- **Capital improvement projects** that are beyond an applicant's current financial capacity
- **Projects that leverage additional funding**, where support from the Community Foundation of White County enables applicants to secure matching or complementary resources from other sources.

The Foundation prioritizes projects that reach a broad segment of the community, strengthen organizational capacity, and enhance an organization's ability to serve White County residents over the long term. All funded programs and projects must directly serve the White County community.

What is not funded? Policies governing the Foundation generally preclude funding for:

- Individuals
- Endowments
- Ongoing operating budgets, existing deficits, debt reduction
- Religious activities or programs that are serving or appear to serve predominantly one denomination and not the community at large
- Political organizations or candidates

How much funding is available? Partners may apply for funding requests up to \$100,000.

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Application & Reporting



Step 1: Letter of Intent

Applicants begin by submitting a Letter of Intent (LOI) to provide a brief overview of their project and determine eligibility. Letters of Intent must not exceed three pages and may be sent in a pdf attachment to our Executive Assistant, rachael@cfwhitecounty.org.

The LOI should include:

- Organization name, mission, tax ID number, and contact information
- If first time applying to CFWC grants, a copy of its IRS determination letter
- Project summary and purpose
- Target audience or beneficiaries
- Estimated total cost and amount requested
- Anticipated outcomes or impact

Selected applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal.

Step 2: Full Proposal

Invited applicants will complete a detailed application, including:

- Organizational overview and leadership
- Project narrative and implementation plan
- Budget and sources of support
- Upload of organization's 990
- Collaboration details (if applicable)
- Evaluation plan (how impact will be measured)
- Letter of support from its Board of Directors
- (optional) Upload of up to 2 additional letters of support

Step 3: Review and Selection

Applications are reviewed by the Foundation's Grants Committee, with recommendations presented to CFWC's Governing Council, and final approval by CFGL's Board of Directors.

Evaluation criteria include:

- Alignment with Foundation priorities
- Demonstrated community need and impact
- Collaboration and inclusivity
- Feasibility and sustainability

Step 4: Reporting

Grantees are required to submit a final report summarizing:

- How funds were used
- Measurable outcomes and community benefit

Progress updates may be requested for larger projects.

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Timeline & FAQs



Grant Kickoff Sessions	February 25 th and 26th
Letter of Intent Due	March 9 th
Invitation to Apply	March 16th
Application Due	May 20th
Announcement of Awards	June 26th
Access to Funds	After the completion of the grant agreement form

Frequently Asked Questions

Do projects have to serve White County residents?

Yes. All funded programs and projects must directly serve residents of White County. Regional projects may be considered.

Are grants reimbursable or paid upfront?

All grants are reimbursable. Grantees will be required to submit paid invoices, receipts, or other documentation as outlined in the grant agreement in order to receive reimbursement.

How long do I have to complete the grant?

Funds must be spent by December 1, 2028. Once a grant agreement form is submitted, it can take ~2-3 weeks to receive your check.

Are religious or political organizations eligible?

The Foundation does not fund political organizations or candidates. Religious organizations may be eligible only if the proposed project serves the broader community and does not promote or appear to promote a specific denomination.

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FAQs (continued)



Can grant funds be used for operating expenses?

Generally, grants do not support ongoing operating budgets, existing deficits, or debt reduction. However, certain start-up or one-time costs tied to a specific project or program may be considered if they align with the grant's purpose and demonstrate sustainability.

Can I submit a Letter of Intent if I do not attend a Grant Kickoff Session?

While we encourage participation in the Grant Kickoff Sessions so that you feel prepared and supported through the grant process, it is not required.

Do I have to attend both Grant Kickoff Sessions?

No, each session will cover the same content.

What is the review and selection process?

Reviewing proposals includes the Grant Committee made up of community members with support from internal staff. This ensures rich perspectives from people with personal and professional experiences. Final decisions on all grant requests rest with the board of directors on the recommendations of the grants committees.

Can completed projects be funded retroactively?

No. Programs or capital projects that have already been completed are not eligible for funding.

Is collaboration required?

Collaboration is not required but is strongly encouraged where appropriate. Projects that demonstrate meaningful partnerships and shared impact may be more competitive.

How are grant decisions made?

Applications are reviewed by the Foundation's Grants Committee, with recommendations presented to the Governing Council and final approval by the Community Foundation of Greater Lafayette's Board of Directors. CFGL's Board of approval is required due to CFWC being an affiliate organization. Funding decisions are based on alignment with CFWC's priorities, demonstrated community need, feasibility, sustainability, and potential impact.

Are reports required after funding is awarded?

Yes. All grantees must submit a final report describing how funds were used and the outcomes achieved. Progress updates may also be requested for larger or multi-phase projects. The specifics of the reporting will be outlined in the grant agreement form. Failure to complete reports will impact an organization's ability to apply for future grants.