



Communityworks Grant Guidelines

The **COMMUNITY FOUNDATION of Kankakee River Valley**'s mission is to build endowment funds for our region over time, and it strives to bring together individuals and organizations to assess community needs, to build greater endowment funds, to convene area leaders around important issues, and to distribute grant awards to worthy nonprofit organizations. The Foundation also serves as a neutral leader with no direct affiliation with any group, religion, political or governmental entity.

Through the Communityworks Endowment Fund, The Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley will provide grants to organizations with charitable 501(c)(3) classifications by the Internal Revenue Service, or to quasi-governmental agencies, (e.g., school districts, libraries, park districts, etc.) in the Greater Kankakee River Valley Area. The Grants Committee select grants for funding in response to applications submitted through the Community Foundation's online grant application. The committee will submit their recommendations for final approval to the Community Foundation Board of Directors.

If this is the first time your organization is applying for a Communityworks Grant, you will need to attend a Grantseekers Workshop held virtually through ZOOM. Multiple times on the selected date will be available to choose from. For those who have applied in the past, you may also attend the briefing, but it is not required. The briefing will provide a general procedural overview, important dates to know and the opportunity for applicants to ask questions and learn other specifics.

Register for the Grantseekers Workshop on our website www.cfkrv.org under the Spring Grant Cycle section. Select "How to Apply for a Grant" under the Grants tab.

Note* This is the first Communityworks Grant Cycle using our new Grants Platform. If you have applied in the past but did not apply in our 2022 Fall Grant Cycle, this will be the first time your organization will be registering in the Grants Portal. Please follow the registration guidelines.

To begin an application, you must register the organization applying. If your organization has previously applied for any grants through this grant platform, or you believe a profile for your organization has already been established, please contact the administrative team (mia@cfkrv.org) to be added to the organization's profile as a user.

You can verify if your organization currently has a profile established when entering the EIN number.

Existing Users: Please enter your credentials and log in. If you forgot your password, please use the "Forgot your Password?" link to the left to reset your password.

Grantmaking Priorities

The Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley has developed an Impact Plan on the community's greatest needs across three focus areas:

- **Early Childhood Education**
- **Land Use & Protection**
- **Workforce Development**

The Foundation used a multi-faceted approach to develop the Impact Plan, including Town Hall public meetings, discussions with community leaders, information shared by other community foundations, and research.

Grants from the Communityworks Endowment Fund are to address one or more of the priority needs identified under each of the focus areas listed below. A significant aspect of the Community Foundation's mission is to convene community groups to address community needs. Applicants may also submit grant applications to convene appropriate groups to address the needs listed below. Convening and collaboration are encouraged!

Early Childhood Education

The community has determined that the Community Foundation can have the greatest impact on Early Childhood Education (birth to age 8) by supporting:

- (1) **The improvement of the quality of child care;**
- (2) **The support for parent education;**
- (3) **The improvement of the quality and accessibility of early childhood education services, and**
- (4) **The improvement of opportunities to access children's mental health services.**

More specifically the Community Foundation seeks to

Improve the Quality of Childcare by:

- Soliciting grant applications with creative solutions for improving the quality of local childcare, specifically home-based, license-exempt providers.
- Funding programs that improve, advance or develop programs to improve childcare programs.

Support Parental Education by:

- Supporting the creation of web-based parent education that widely disseminates parent education information about local, school-based, Birth-to-Eight programs.
- Supporting grant applications with creative approaches for providing parental education.

Improve the Quality and Accessibility of Early Childhood Education Services by:

- Convening local, center-based, and family-based childcare providers for a "Child Care Collaborative," where members exchange ideas, concerns, solutions, and submit joint grant applications for Illinois Early Childhood grant funds.
- Supporting initiatives to expand home-visiting programs.

Improve Access to Children's Mental Health Services by:

- Supporting the initiatives to improve community awareness of children's mental health needs and capacity-building initiatives aimed at young children.

Land Use & Protection

The community has determined that the Community Foundation can have the greatest impact in these areas by:

- (1) Expanding community efforts on land development with consideration for recreation focused on the benefits of the Kankakee River;**
- (2) Taking steps to preserve “rural charm” of our service area;**
- (3) Supporting efforts to address transportation issues.**

More specifically the Community Foundation seeks to:

Expand Community Efforts on Land Development by:

- Assisting in the planning and implementation of programs focused on improving neighborhoods in area communities through various economic and tax incentives. The County has formalized programs such as Main Street, Historical Preservation, brownfields, and urban renewal strategies.
- Continuing to convene planning and advisory meetings for the Riverfront Biking & Walking Trail Initiative. These efforts are critical in the development of the Riverfront for maximum benefit to the community.
- Preserve & protect the trails of the area and surrounding communities.

Preserve a “Rural Charm” Atmosphere by:

- Cooperating with local historical organizations already in place in various municipalities to implement county-wide historic districts.

Focus on Transportation by:

Supporting public forums to inform and involve residents and elected officials with information on initiatives to progress transportation projects. Transportation projects may involve seeking capital funds and encouraging long-term planning among multiple levels of government.

Develop Plans for County Infrastructure & Zoning by:

- Facilitating communications to the public on the various programs underway to improve zoning and infrastructure by the Kankakee County Planning Department.
- Assisting with a focus on quality development along the ½ mile corridors on each side of Interstate 57 to reflect favorable appearances for developers, residents and travelers.
- Convening public forums and other meetings to foster public and governmental collaboration.

Workforce Development

Our area’s communities have determined that the Community Foundation can have significant impact by supporting:

- (1) Increased work opportunities for unemployed/underemployed youth through collaboration with the Workforce Board and other governmental and community-based organizations.**
- (2) Youth programs that prepare entry-level employment through the development of soft skills and work experience.**

More specifically the Community Foundation seeks to:

Increase Work Opportunities for unemployed/underemployed community youth through collaboration with the Workforce Board and other governmental and community service providers via training partnerships, work experience, resource identification, workshops, surveys and other information-gathering efforts as well as through coordinated partnerships for workforce development strategies, initiatives and sponsorships.

Prepare youth for entry-level employment through the development of soft skills and work experience via sponsorship of programs designed and implemented to prepare youth with employment soft skills, job-seeking and job-retaining skills and youth work experience. The Community Foundation also seeks to collaborate and coordinate efforts with appropriate community partners to seek external funding resources or to underwrite costs as well as to assure quality employment preparation of youth including supportive, on-the-job work experience and workplace expectations.

Projects Generally Not Funded

While the Community Foundation attempts to remain flexible in responding to community needs, in general, grants are not awarded for:

- Religious purposes (However, grants may be given to religious organizations for programs or projects that are consistent with the Community Stewardship Fund grant priorities)
- Purchase of advertising
- Capital or operation debt reduction; however, capital items needed for training purposes will be considered
- Political campaigns or to support attempts to influence legislative issues of any governmental body
- Multiple proposals from one organization

Are There Expense Categories Discouraged by the Community Foundation which could jeopardize selection?

- Expenses for technology with shorter-term life/use.
- Administrative costs (particularly salary, fringe benefits, space, general office expenses such as utilities, office equipment, supplies, etc.)

The Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley operates without discrimination as to race, religion, sex, and national origin in considering grant requests from agencies and organizations.

Community Foundation Grant Making

The Community Foundation will consider only one request from a single (organization) entity. Proposals are reviewed, evaluated, and recommended by the Grants Committee with the Community Foundation Board of Directors approving the final award recommendations. Because the Foundation cannot fund all the requests it receives, the Committee and the Board of Directors rely on the following general policies and considerations for award selections.

- Grant applications are to adhere strictly to the grant application instructions.
- Grant awards are to be made only to those nonprofit organizations and programs operating within the Greater Kankakee River Valley Area.

- Awards are made only to organizations currently holding charitable 501(c)(3) classifications as designated by the Internal Revenue Service, or to quasi-governmental agencies, e.g., school districts, libraries, park districts, etc.
- Awards are intended to be made for one year at a time. Multiple-year awards may be considered if circumstances justify; however, potential for sustainability after the grant award period may receive favored judging. Please articulate commitments for sustaining your program.
- The evaluation process may include an on-site visit by Foundation representatives.
- Awardees may reapply in subsequent years by re-submitting full applications in subsequent funding cycles.

How Does an Organization Apply?

Carefully read and adhere to the grant application instructions. It is important that all requested information is provided. If you have questions, you may contact the Community Foundation Office at 815-939-1611 or by email at mia@cfkrv.org. The link to the online application is available on our website, www.cfkrv.org. Select “How to Apply for a Grant” under the Grants tab.

Direct link to grants portal: <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=cfkrv>

How Are Grant Applications Evaluated?

After initial review and screening by the Community Foundation Administration, the Community Foundation Grants Committee reviews and recommends applications for awards primarily based on the following criteria:

- The visibility and impact of the project should be apparent to current and potential Communityworks Endowment Fund donors.
- The project should be currently actionable – Is the community supportive of and receptive to the initiative?
- The need for and the significance of the project should be obvious and relatively simple to communicate to the community.
- Successful outcomes and the impact of the project should be readily identifiable, measurable, and reported to the community via the media.
- The receiving organization needs to demonstrate that it has the necessary experience and capacity to successfully implement and execute the project.
- The proposed project should demonstrate how it is creative and how it has the potential to stimulate the interest of the public and media.
- Projects which impact multiple focus areas (Workforce Development, Early Childhood Education, and Land Use & Protection) may receive higher priority by the Community Foundation for funding.
- The grant application must satisfy the criteria described above under “Grant Guidelines”

Grant Follow-up

All recipients of a Communityworks grant must select a reporting option to complete the end of grant evaluation for their project/program. All follow up forms will be available for viewing and submission in the grant application portal.