

GRANT GUIDELINES



The Initiative Foundation makes grants for projects and programs that advance our mission to *unlock the power of central Minnesota people to build and sustain healthy communities.*

Nearly 85 percent of our grant dollars are awarded to projects that originate from participation in our *Healthy Communities Partnership (HCP), Healthy Lakes and Rivers Partnership (HLRP), Healthy Organizations Partnership "Strengthening Communities Fund" (HOP), the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative (ECI), the Minnesota Thrive Initiative for early childhood mental health, and the Inside-Out Connections (IOC) project.* Information on each of these programs is posted on our website at www.ifound.org.

Remaining grant support is allocated through our "**Innovation Fund**" or the appropriate Component Funds (see website), and is awarded through an open grant inquiry process. Given recent trends in the economy, all Innovation Fund grants must support projects which address at least one of the following areas:

- Help communities plan for and address opportunities or barriers to economic development, including transportation, childcare, affordable housing, financial literacy, and sustainable energy.
- Organizations engaging and serving vulnerable children and families, particularly those working to help meet basic needs and improve family financial conditions.
- Support training programs for at-risk and displaced workers that lead to employment or advancement in growing industries.
- Help small businesses survive and grow through access to consulting services, mentorship and education efforts provided by nonprofit entities.
- Help communities explore improved efficiencies through shared services with nearby local units of government or public-private partnerships.

Eligible Applicants must be 501(c)(3) nonprofits, local units of government that serve the communities of Benton, Cass, Chisago, Crow Wing, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Pine, Sherburne, Stearns, Todd, Wadena, and Wright Counties. *Funding requests for projects outside of this area will not be considered. Individuals are ineligible to apply for funds. The Initiative Foundation will not provide grants, loans or expense reimbursements to individuals.*

In the most recent fiscal year, the Initiative Foundation's average grant award was approximately \$5,000. Grant funding typically observes the following maximum levels:

- Nonprofit organizational effectiveness efforts: up to \$2,500
- Program/project planning or short-term efforts: up to \$2,500
- Program/project implementation for projects: up to \$5,000

INQUIRY AND APPLICATION PROCESS

Inquiries

Qualified organizations interested in applying to the Initiative Foundation are asked to **complete the Grant Inquiry Form, which can be found at www.ifound.org on the “Grants” page under “How to Apply.”** Inquiries are accepted on an ongoing basis and are generally reviewed within 14 days upon receipt. If the proposed project appears to fit within priority funding areas and meets funding criteria, a full proposal will be invited.

There are separate application procedures and timelines for the Initiative Foundation’s partnership programs (HCP, HLRP, HOP, Strengthening Communities Fund, ECI, IOC and Thrive) and inquiry forms may not be needed. Contact appropriate program staff for details.

Full Proposals

If your organization is invited to submit a full application in response to your grant inquiry, the appropriate application materials will be forwarded to you. Proposals are accepted on an ongoing basis and are generally reviewed within 90 days of receipt.

The Initiative Foundation strives to treat our applicants with courtesy and respect. Staff members are sensitive to varying levels of experience in completing grant applications, and therefore encourage open communication with our staff for assistance. Questions may be submitted to the Initiative Foundation via the “Contact Us” form located on our website.

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

- Capital expenses (e.g., buildings, equipment, signs, vehicles, etc.).
- Expenses incurred prior to receipt of grant award.
- Any programs or projects that DO NOT directly benefit residents in the Initiative Foundation’s 14-county service area.
- Replacement of government or other funding.
- Endowments and local fund drives.
- Grants, loans or reimbursements to individuals and businesses.
- Religious activities.
- Lobbying or campaigning for a candidate, issue or referendum vote.
- Development or purchase of school curriculum or support for school athletic programs.
- Arts, health-related and media production applications are discouraged, unless they are a part of a strategic plan developed through an Initiative Foundation partnership program.

For more information, please contact us at:

grants@ifound.org
405 First Street SE, Little Falls, MN 56345
320/632-9255 or toll free 877/632-9255
www.ifound.org

REVIEW CRITERIA

When preparing an inquiry or a funding application for Innovation or Component Fund requests, be sure to indicate how the following will be integrated in to your program/project:

- 1.** Describe how the program/project will create positive and lasting change for residents within the 14 counties previously listed.
- 2.** Applicants must show evidence of broad-based community involvement in both the planning and implementation of the project. List contact information for partnerships and collaboratives. How will local relationships and a sense of community be enhanced?
- 3.** Applicants must demonstrate how local cash or in-kind resources, including volunteers, are identified and mobilized for the project. Include a detailed list of other funding sources that are committed or pending.
- 4.** Project ideas should show creative, innovative approaches for addressing needs and opportunities. How is this project different from other efforts? Indicate how those affected by the project have and will be involved in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the project, and an active part of the solution.
- 5.** If the project uses consultant(s), include contact information and detail their responsibilities.