



2012 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.*** We do this through our programs, Innovation Fund, and community and donor advised funds.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants must be 501(c)(3) nonprofits or 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/or Wright Counties. ***Funding requests for 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.***

Innovation Fund

Our "Innovation Fund" (totaling approx. \$200,000 in 2012), and is awarded through a competitive review process. In the most recent fiscal year, the Initiative Foundation's average grant award was approximately \$5,000. Given recent trends in the economy, all Innovation Fund grants must support projects which address at least one of the following areas:

- Help communities address opportunities or barriers to business growth and employment with active participation by private, public and not-for-profit sectors. (For example, projects may focus on issues such as transportation, childcare, financial literacy, and sustainable energy.)
- Advance economic self-sufficiency for vulnerable children and families by supporting nonprofits that work in these areas.
- Support training programs for future, displaced or underemployed workers that lead to employment or advancement in growing industries.
- Help small businesses survive and grow through access to services provided by nonprofit entities, such as consulting services, mentorship and education efforts.
- Help communities improve efficiencies through shared services with other units of government or public-private partnerships resulting in faster, higher quality, or more cost-effective services.
- Support local units of government in planning for recreational amenities such as interconnected trail networks which enhance regional quality of life.
- Support for community-based response and recovery planning associated with significant natural disasters.

Ineligible Expenses

The following expenses are ineligible and will not be considered for Innovation funding:

- Grants, loans, or reimbursements to individuals and businesses.
- Expenses incurred prior to the receipt of a grant award.
- Capital Expenses (e.g., buildings, equipment, signs, vehicles, etc.).
- Any programs or projects that DO NOT directly benefit residents in the Initiative Foundations 14-county service area.
- Replacement of government funding.
- 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 part of a strategic plan developed through an Initiative Foundation partnership program.

Application Process

Letter of Inquiry (LOI)

Qualified organizations interested in applying to the Initiative Foundation are asked to complete an electronic Letter of Inquiry, which can be found at www.ifound.org on the “Grants” page under “How to Apply”.

Inquiries are accepted on an ongoing basis and reviewed quarterly. See timelines below for specific details. If the proposed project is selected by our review committee, appears to fit within priority funding areas, and meets funding criteria, you will be invited to submit a full proposal for the next available round of funding. Please keep in mind that many factors affect the decision of whether or not to invite a full proposal, including but not limited to available funding. We reserve the right to decline a request for any reason (including poor history of report submissions for prior grants, etc.).

Full Proposals

If your organization is invited to submit a full application in response to your LOI, the appropriate application materials will be forwarded to you. Proposals are accepted on a quarterly basis. See timelines below for specific deadlines.

Funding Timelines

Letter of Inquiry Due by:	Notified for Invite or Decline of full proposal no later than:	Full Application Due:	Decisions Made by:
January 31, 2012	February 7 th	Friday, March 2 nd	March 30 th
April 27, 2012	May 4 th	Friday, June 1 st	June 29 th
July 30, 2012	August 7 th	Friday, August 31 st	September 28 th
October 26, 2012	November 2 th	Friday, November 30 th	December 31 st

The Initiative Foundation strives to treat our applicants with courtesy and respect. Staff members are sensitive to varying levels of experience in completing 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.

For more information, please contact us at:
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www.ifound.org