

Community Works Grants

Request for Letters of Intent / Proposals

Application Guidelines and Instructions

I. Background

In 2021, the Community Foundation of Central Illinois (CFCI) received its largest single donation to date from an individual or family – an estate gift worth more than \$3.9 million – from the late Robert E. (Bob) Gilmore, retired president of Caterpillar, Inc.

Prior to his death in September of 2020, Gilmore created a legacy through a planned gift to provide funds that would benefit local nonprofits. With this gift CFCI has established the Gilmore Fund, which will provide annual grants in perpetuity to organizations and programs which will maintain and enhance culture, improve society, and promote job creation and retention in the central Illinois area.

II. Purpose

The Community Foundation is working to gain a broader understanding of challenges and opportunities within the focus area of economic development as it exists within our community, with a goal of driving systematic, long-term change.

As such, CFCI is interested in investing in collaborative economic development programs that emphasize job creation and retention. We are not looking to fund individual organizations working in isolation; rather, we are seeking innovative collaboration among 2 or more organizations.

III. Proposal Requirements

A. Address CFCI's Areas of Interest

Projects should address **one or both** of CFCI's areas of interest related to economic development throughout our communities:

1. Job creation
2. Job retention

B. Project Criteria

1. Focus on collaborative projects that help drive change for the entire community
2. Detailed sustainability plan required
3. Preference given to evidence-based practices

C. Eligibility

Agencies must meet CFCI's basic eligibility requirements:

1. Open to all organizations with tax-exempt status under Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code, those that operate under a fiscal agent that is a 501(c)(3) organization, and to local units of local, county, state or federal government.
2. Grant funding may support new or existing programs that positively benefit central Illinois.
3. Program must be operated and organized in such a manner that no applicable laws are violated.
4. Organization must be current on all CFCI grant evaluations.

CFCI does not fund:

1. Annual / capital campaigns
2. Individuals
3. Endowments
4. Sectarian religious purposes: Faith based organizations and churches are eligible if program serves the community
5. Grants will be made to organizations with programs serving individuals within a 50-mile radius of the city of Peoria, IL (excluding Knox and McLean Counties). **Preference in selection of grant recipients will be given to organizations and programs located in Peoria, Tazewell, or Woodford Counties.**

E. Letter of Intent Submission

Step 1: Submit a maximum two-page letter of intent (LOI) on letterhead stationery via email to sarah@communityfoundationci.org. The body of the letter should contain the following information:

- a) Introduction – introduce your organization and collaborative partners (including your mission), population served, and why you are applying;
- b) Project Description – define your project; establish a connection between CFCI priorities and the goals of your project;
- c) Needs – establish the need for the project (use statistics/demographics);
- d) Solution – discuss how your proposed collaborative project would address the identified need and solve the problem; if this type of project is offered elsewhere in the community, describe how yours is different;
- e) Project plan – describe the project activities, methodology, and timetable for project completion;
- f) Organizational capacity – your capacity to complete the project
- g) Budget;
- h) Sustainability – explain how the project will be continued post-funding.

Step 2: CFCI committee reviews LOI. If warranted, an invitation to submit a full proposal will be offered.

Step 3: Submit proposal utilizing CFCI's online application process

Full Proposal

Proposals will be by invitation only, and should cover the following:

1. List of collaborating project partners, what roles and commitments they bring to the project, and the structure of the collaboration;
2. Capacity/key staff qualifications;
3. Project contact person;
4. Summary of the lead organization, its purpose, history, and major programs and activities;
5. Description of community need and benefit;

6. Explanation of how project relates to CFCI's project goals and objectives;
7. Beginning date of project;
8. Length of project;
9. Project description (including goals, objectives, outcomes and area your project will serve/take place);
10. Detailed evaluation process;
11. A timeline indicating milestones for project implementation, and including documentation that demonstrates the planning process up to this point;
12. Detailed project budget, including amount received or committed thus far;
13. Verification of the Lead Organization's 501(c)(3) status including the organization's IRS Federal Letter of Determination, Form 990 or most recent independently audited financial statement and current board of directors & officers list.

If you need assistance with the online grant application process, please contact Sarah Fletcher, Director of Grants and Community Initiatives, at sarah@communityfoundationci.org or call 309-674-8730.

IV. Grants

Grants will be for one-year with a maximum award of \$50,000.

Projects must reflect collaborative/multi-organization efforts with one lead organization designated to apply for CFCI funds.

*****Please note: Funded organizations will need to track and report the following demographic data for individuals served through the Community Works Grant:**

- Age (0-17 / 18-64 / 65+)
- Race/Ethnicity (American Indian or Alaska Native / Asian / Black or African American / Hispanic or Latino / Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander / White / Other)
- Gender (male/female/transgender/other)
- Employment status (part time/full time/unemployed)
- Zip code
- Disabling conditions (including but not limited to: physical disability / neurological disability / visual or hearing impairment / psychiatric disability / other, please specify)
- Veteran status (yes/no)

V. Timelines

2021 RFP to be issued: November 1, 2021

Networking Forum: November 10, 2021 @ 8:30 a.m. via Zoom

Letter of Intent Due: November 23, 2021

Invitation to Submit Full Proposal to be Sent: December 10, 2021

Full Proposal Due: February 11, 2022 (application link will be emailed)

Grant Decisions: March 4, 2022

CFCI reserves the right to deviate from this schedule at any time without prior notice.

CFCI may request an in-person presentation.

Frequently Asked Questions

What type of projects will be considered?

The Community Works Grant RFP is targeting projects that are working at the local economic development level. We are looking for projects with specific measurable outcomes that touch more than one organization or community group. These could be economic development programs that emphasize job creation and retention through specific efforts in workforce readiness, business start-ups/ entrepreneurship, talent attraction/retention, neighborhood development, small business development, business retention and expansion, technology transfer, and real estate development.

*The following are a few **examples** of possible job creation/job retention projects:*

- 1. Developing a case management system for job seeking individuals*
- 2. Supporting local entrepreneurial efforts through guidance and resource development*
- 3. Creating a partnership between existing job training/mentorship programs to share resources*
- 4. Providing long-term mentors that help individuals navigate barriers related to gaining employment*
- 5. Coordinating financial support for individuals while they are receiving job training or certification*
- 6. Training that equips individuals with the skills to earn significantly more than minimum wage (helping break the cycle of poverty)*

If multiple community partners are involved, who should apply?

Select one lead nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, tax-exempt private agency or local government entity to handle program and fiscal management. However, funding may be used to support the project activities of other community organizations (not individuals). All partner organizations and contact information must be included in the application.

Our organization is not a 501(c)(3). Can we use another organization's 501(c)(3) or a fiscal agent to submit a grant?

No, we do not permit the use of fiscal agents for this grant opportunity. A 501(c)(3) organization, tax-exempt private agency or local government entity must adopt the project as its own, with its board assuming legal and fiscal responsibility, and submit its own application as lead for the project.

Can an organization that currently has an active grant from CFCI apply?

Yes, the Community Works Grant RFP is a separate funding opportunity.

Does receiving a Community Works Grant from CFCI preclude an organization from applying for another grant opportunity?

No. Organizations may still apply for Community Needs, Community Arts, Local Jobs Fund, Women's Fund, and/or Emerging Philanthropists Fund grants. However, if a project is funded through the Community Works Grant, the organization is not permitted to submit that same project for additional CFCI funding.

Does an organization need to be a previous CFCI grant recipient to apply for this RFP?

No, lead/partner organizations do not need to be previous CFCI grant recipients.

Who may we contact with questions?

Please contact Sarah Fletcher, Director of Grants and Community Initiatives, at sarah@communityfoundationci.org or call 309-674-8730.