



POLK COUNTY COMMUNITY BETTERMENT GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

(Please read all guidelines prior to starting your application.)

I. Overview and Application Submissions

- A. Through the Community Betterment Grant Program, Polk County, Iowa seeks to benefit as many qualified organizations as possible with the funds available. Community Betterment Grant requests can be in the range of \$500 – \$10,000.
- B. Due to limited funds and the large number of requests, Polk County is unable to act favorably on all applications received. Each application is evaluated on overall community impact, compliance with Polk County guidelines, and availability of funds.
- C. Polk County does not always provide the entire amount requested by grant applicants. Polk County reserves the right to partially fund requests in order to provide funding to more organizations and projects.
- D. Applications are accepted once per calendar year, from the dates of December 1 through February 28.
- E. All applications shall be submitted, without exception, via the Polk County Online Application and Reporting System. Any application received after the deadline shall not be accepted. The deadline to submit a Polk County Community Betterment Grant Application is February 28th, by 11:59 p.m. All applications shall be submitted via the Polk County Online Application and Reporting System. **No exceptions will be made.** Any application received after 11:59 p.m. on February 28th shall not be accepted.

II. Grant Review Timeline

The Polk County Grant Administrator will review all eligible Community Betterment Grant applications and provide the Board of Supervisors with pertinent information. The Board of Supervisors will make recommendations for approval or denial between March through July 30th. Awards will be formally approved and announced at a meeting of the Polk County Board of Supervisors.

III. Guidelines for the review and approval of grant applications

- A. The Applicant Organization shall be a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization registered in

the State of Iowa and shall also meet the following criteria:

1. Has received a formal tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). (Organizations awaiting IRS tax exempt status are not eligible to apply for Community Betterment Grant funding from Polk County); and
 - a. Is a nonprofit organization organized exclusively for the promotion of social welfare as determined by Polk County at its sole discretion; or
 - b. Is a unit of a political subdivision, a public school district, or a church/religious organization requesting funds not related to a building or repairing a place of worship or financially supporting a minister or a ministry.
- B. Polk County will accept Community Betterment Grant applications for funding in the range of \$500 – \$10,000.
- C. Applicant Organizations shall not submit grant applications to both Polk County Community Betterment and Polk County Community Development programs for the same project.
- D. Applicants requesting funding for more than one project must complete and submit a separate grant application for each project.
- E. Future applications for grants by an Applicant Organization will only be considered for an award after all reporting requirements for any previous grants to the Applicant Organization are completed.
- F. Applications will only be considered for organizations, projects, programs, events, or services located within Polk County.
- F. All applicants must describe how their project serves a “Public Purpose”. A “Public Purpose” is defined as: An action by or at the direction of a government entity for promotion of the public health, safety, morals, general welfare, security, prosperity and contentment of all the inhabitants or residents within a given political division. Economic development is one type of public purpose for which a government entity may provide grants, guarantees, tax incentives, or other financial assistance.
- G. Applicant Organizations shall demonstrate a need for financial assistance.
- H. Applicant Organizations shall identify a community need and public purpose for the proposed project or program.
- I. The project or program shall enhance the Polk County community and improve the quality of life for the residents of Polk County.

IV. Funding priorities

Polk County, Iowa awards Community Betterment Grants in the following categories:

- A. Arts and Culture projects or programs:
 - That promote Iowa's historic, ethnic, and cultural heritages.
 - That provide festivals, music, drama, cultural programs, tourist attraction opportunities, and/or educational experiences.
 - That provide access to the arts for new and/or underserved audiences.
- B. Economic Development projects or programs:
 - That provide a significant impact on a community and its residents.
 - That emphasize environmental, beautification, or restoration efforts.
 - That promote park(s), trail(s), and their associated programs.
- C. Education projects or programs:
 - That provide enhancements and necessities for students.
 - That either reach a broad range of students or that target a specific demographic of students in need of assistance.
 - That provide technology and or other enhancements in the classrooms and buildings for the use of students.
- D. Health and Human Services projects or programs:
 - That provide health education or direct health services to residents of Polk County.
 - Fire, Police, Behavioral Health, or Emergency Management services and programs.
 - That provide services for low-income, at-risk, or underserved residents of Polk County.
- E. Recreational services and programs (i.e., YMCA).
- F. Charitable services and programs
- G. Conservation services and programs (i.e., wetland restoration).

V. Limitations

- A. Polk County will only award funds to an object or organization that is under religious control when the grant funds are to be utilized for a project or program that benefits the public and does not require any religious or sectarian services, educational programs, or participation requirements.
- B. Polk County will not accept Community Betterment Grant Applications **for**:
 - Conferences, seminars, convention attendance or expenses for employees, volunteers, board members, or anyone related to the organization.
 - Debt-reduction.
 - Educational scholarships – Will be reviewed only if grant funds are paid directly to educational institution.
 - Expenses for fundraising/campaign consultants or contracted services.
 - Expenses for grant writers or grant application preparers.
 - Feasibility studies, operating, or strategic plans.

- Fellowships.
- Memorials for an individual.
- Multi-year funding requests.
- Building or repairing a place of worship or financially supporting a minister or ministry.
- Personnel expenses including salaries, bonuses, mileage and/or employee benefits.
- Projects that have already been completed.
- Promotional pieces that are not related to the project.
- Repayments on loans.
- Gift Cards.

C. Polk County will not accept Community Betterment Grant applications **from**:

- Political parties, campaigns, candidates, or partisan organizations.
- From any organization that has an overdue Polk County Community Betterment Grant requirement.
- From individuals, for any purpose.
- From organizations, projects, or programs outside Iowa.
- From organizations that would redistribute the Polk County Community Betterment Grant funds to other groups (with the exception of a fiscal agent).
- The Board of Supervisors will have discretion to make exceptions to any of the above limitations based on extenuating circumstances and upon approval of the majority of the Board.