Shaping Tomorrow Awards

In 2024, the Lancaster County Community Foundation celebrates its 100th anniversary! For the past 100 years, the Community Foundation has supported the county in small and large ways to help it become such a wonderful place to live, work, and play in our neighborhoods, the beautiful countryside, and within our bustling city. We know Lancaster County is only great when all of us thrive.

To celebrate 100 years of history, we want to catalyze ideas that will move Lancaster County forward for the next 100! Think of it as "angel investing" for our shared future.

Whether these ideas are dreaming big or starting small, we want to support the very best projects that focus on **4 broad categories: Creative Expression, Well-Being and Vibrancy, Our Planet, and Next Generation**. We envision supporting equitable and inclusive projects that embolden the hopes and dreams of all our residents—acknowledging this hasn't always been the case. We also want to support new innovative practices to propel these concepts forward.

One application in total per Community Benefit Organization (CBO) will be accepted. Projects **must** benefit Lancaster County residents exclusively.

We are allocating $250,000 for each of the four categories. We will accept applications at three levels:

- Level 1 – Projects asking for $5,000 - $14,999
- Level 2 – Projects asking for $15,000 - $49,999
- Level 3 – Projects asking for $50,000 - $100,000. For large projects, we ask for **collaboration** between two or more organizations. One would be a 501(c)(3) community benefit organization, and the other could be a CBO, a for-profit entity, or a municipality.

1. **Creative Expression** (NOTE: Sam and Verda Taylor, Florence Starr Taylor grants for 2024 will be added to this) Recognizing the arts contribute to healthy communities and local economies, we also know talented folks can educate, inspire, and bring about lasting change. We will support projects related to visual arts, performing arts, music, dance, poetry, spoken word, and/or film that promote diverse voices, cultural understanding, community murals, and artistic innovation.

2. **Well-Being and Vibrancy** How might we put Lancaster County on the map as a place where people are physically, mentally, and financially healthy? We will support projects focused on mental health, healthcare access, nutrition, physical activity, elder care, and/or financial health.

3. **Our Planet** (NOTE: Lancaster Environmental Fund grant for 2024 will be added to this) We know Lancaster County faces many unique environmental challenges simultaneously: our air quality is poor, our waterways are notorious for polluting the Chesapeake Bay, our tree cover is sparse, we need to save the bits of natural land that remain, and the unpredictability of our future climate threatens our agriculture. We are looking for the best ideas focused on things like land conservation, renewable energy, adaptation to climate change, biodiversity, and/or environmental education.

4. **Next Generation** We need to embolden and invest in the next generation of children and young adults, by providing them with immense opportunities to lead. We are excited to support projects in education, skills development, and/or leadership development. Specific examples could include mentorship programs, scholarships, and/or social entrepreneurship training.

Virtual Information Meeting: https://vimeo.com/869578579

Eligibility Summary

Organizations must meet the following requirements:

- Serve Lancaster County***** residents without discrimination.
- Current 501(c)(3)** designation from the IRS.
- Registered with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Charitable Organizations unless otherwise exempt per the Institutions of Purely Public Charity Act.
- Complete IRS Form 990 annually.
- Annual audit or a financial review by an independent CPA is within the last 12 months.
- In good standing with all existing awards and contracts with the Lancaster County Community Foundation.
- Provide organizational Non-Discrimination Policy meeting all federal requirements as it applies to your type of organization [(FAQs)](#).
- Be aware of the Community Foundation's [Anti-Hate policy](#).

Application Process

STAGE 1 - Complete Letter of Intent (LOI) in the grant portal at Lancfound.org/grants. The LOI provides basic organizational information and a brief description of your project concept. Stage 1 will also include a 2-3 minute video, submitted through the same portal, introducing and describing how your concept aligns with one of the four categories, and the impact the project will have in our community.

STAGE 2 – The top 12 concepts per category will be selected by a team of Community Foundation staff and board members. These 12 organizations will be invited to submit a full application by the final deadline as defined by category. The Community Foundation will not provide feedback on application drafts.

1st Quarter Award Timeline (Creative Expression & Well-Being)

- Stage 1 opens: December 7, 2023
- Stage 1 Deadline: January 22, 2024
- Stage 2 Invitations sent: January 31, 2024
- Stage 2 Deadline: February 19, 2024
- Award notifications:
  - March 27 for Creative Expression
  - April 20 for Well-Being
- Grant funding period: as advised by applicant
- Completion Report due: as advised by applicant

3rd Quarter Award Timeline (Our Planet & Next Generation)

- Stage 1 opens: June 3, 2024
- Stage 1 Deadline: July 22, 2024
- Stage 2 Invitations sent: July 31, 2024
- Stage 2 Deadline: August 19, 2024
- Award notifications:
  - September 28 for Next Generation
  - October 17 for Our Planet
- Grant funding period: as advised by applicant
- Completion Report due: as advised by applicant

Stage 1 Application questions (1st AND 3rd Quarter Awards)

- Single narrative question: Describe your proposed project at a high level, including the vision for how your project can bring transformational change for Lancaster County residents in one of the four categories. Tell us the dollar amount you will request, who your partners are, generally how the funds will be used, and what goals you expect to achieve. Describe the innovative nature of your project and how it will contribute to a more equitable Lancaster County. (2,000 character limit).

- Upload a 2-3 minute video to visually introduce your concept, explain alignment with one of the four Shaping Tomorrow Awards categories, and the community impact you expect to achieve. You might want to use the video to briefly introduce key staff, clients, volunteers, and/or the physical space you intend to use for your work. In the spirit of equity, we ask that videos are NOT professionally produced, but are succinct, conversational, and fun!
  - *__Tips:__* Before uploading your video, confirm your audio is clear and loud enough to hear.
  - If your video exceeds 3 minutes in length, we'll only consider the first 3 minutes of content, for the sake of fairness to all applicants.
  - Horizontal video orientation is preferred over vertical.

Stage 2 Application questions (1st AND 3rd Quarter Awards)

- **Vision –** What is your project idea and how might it bring long-lasting change to Lancaster County? (2,000 characters)

- **Implementation Plan –** Describe the processes you will use to implement your project and how grant dollars will be spent. (2,000 characters)

- **Goals and Achievements –** What are your goals and how will you evaluate the project's achievements? (2,000 characters)

- **Innovation -** How does your strategy go beyond doing business as usual to create more impact? (2,000 characters)

- **Equity and Inclusion –** How is your organization creating practices of equity and inclusion with this project? If applicable, how does this project address issues identified in Lancaster's Equity Profile? (2,000 characters)

Stage 1 AND Stage 2 Evaluation Criteria (1st AND 3rd Quarter Awards)

- **Vision** – To what extent does the application demonstrate a vision for change in the community?

- **Implementation Plan** (Stage 2 only) – To what extent does the application account for the logistics necessary to achieve goals?

- **Goals and Achievements** – To what extent does the application outline and evaluate attainable and impactful goals?

- **Innovation** - To what extent does the application demonstrate new thinking needed to be effective in the long-term?

- **Equity and Inclusion** - To what extent does the organization demonstrate their commitment to equity and inclusion?

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Will the community foundation support things like overhead costs and building projects with these awards?
Yes! We want to support innovation and equity, and we recognize these projects may take many different forms with a variety of needs. We will also consider supporting capital campaigns.

Why is the community foundation requesting "equitable and inclusive projects?
Recognizing certain groups of people (BIPOC, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities) have not been largely included and represented in many past projects, we are doing our part to ensure future projects create a sense of belonging for all residents.

Does my application need to include all three themes mentioned: equitable & inclusive, innovative ideas, long lasting change?
Ideally, your application would include all three themes. We will, however, still evaluate applications that do not touch on all three.

Does the proposed project need to be new, or can it be an existing project?
Our preference is to fund brand new ideas for Lancaster County. We will accept concepts that have been tried in other regions and are being brought to Lancaster County for the first time. We will also accept applications for existing projects, if it can be demonstrated that the organization is adapting the project for long-term success in a meaningful way.

Are there specific start dates for projects?
While all projects should start after grant dollars are awarded, the exact project start, and end date are up to the organization. In your application you will have the opportunity to propose a project timeline, even if it takes 10 years to complete.

Why is the Community Foundation only allowing one proposal in total?
We expect to receive many applications, so we need to be aware of our capacity to evaluate the applications. We only anticipate being able to fund a fraction of the total number of applications.

What if you apply and don't make it to the second stage, can I submit another application?
We are asking organizations to only apply to one category as the primary applicant. Bring your best idea and apply for one category, even if you do not make it to stage 2, we will not be accepting more than one application. You can still be a collaborator in another application where a different organization is the primary applicant.

How does applying for a project with multiple partnering organizations work? How will payments be made?
We ask that one organization act as the primary applicant. They will be responsible for submitting the application, completing follow ups, and managing the award dollars (including paying other organizations of the project). If you are partnering across different sectors, such as municipalities or the for-profit sector, the application must be submitted by the organization with 501c3 status.

I'm an individual with a great idea for a project. What should I do?
While we will not be making awards directly to individuals, we encourage you to speak with a Lancaster County-based community benefit organization who may be interested in working with you to make your dream a reality.

How many awards do you anticipate making? How are you splitting the $1 million across the four categories?
We are being flexible with the number of awards offered across all three levels, depending on the types of projects submitted. We are allocating $250,000 per category.

Is funding renewable?
Funding is a one-time award and not renewable.

Will the Community Foundation play a role in helping to connect organizations to each other if they have complementary projects?
Yes, we will help to the greatest extent possible.

Can these awards cover expenses related to research and development?

While our preference is to fund direct implementation of projects creating long-term change for our community, we will accept applications that may include research and planning as part of an overall project.

Will the Community Foundation be looking for letters of support from project partners?
No. Rather, we encourage you to describe partnerships in Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the application itself.

Can project partners be located outside of Lancaster County?
Yes, we don't require that any of the organizations (applicant or partners) be physically headquartered in Lancaster County. However, the proposed project activities must primarily benefit Lancaster County's residents and/or its environment.

Office Hours – Live via Zoom

Our Programs Team will offer office hours to address any frequently asked questions and answer questions. Feel free to join us! The Zoom link and dates are listed below.

October 20, 2023 10:00 – 11:00 am
November 10, 10:00 – 11:00 am
December 15, 10:00 – 11:00 am
March 14, 2024 10:00 – 11:00 am   https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84276513098
April 19, 10:00 – 11:00 am https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86538152314
May 16, 10:00 – 11:00 am   https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85010202047

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