

The Community Foundation for South Central New York
70 Front St., Binghamton, NY 13905

2010 CommuniFund™ Grant Proposal Guidelines

Note: All applicants must call the Community Foundation at (607) 772-6773 BEFORE preparing the proposal to confirm that the project/purpose falls within the Foundation's guidelines for the current year.

Submission Deadlines:

For 2010, the Foundation considers proposals two times during the year. Proposals for the first grant round are due in the Community Foundation offices by 5:00 p.m. on Monday March 1, 2010. Proposals for the second round are due by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 1, 2010.

Note:

- An organization may submit only one proposal during the calendar year.
- If an organization currently has an open, or active, grant awarded in a previous grant cycle, it cannot apply, regardless of whether all grant payments have been made. The determination as to whether a grant is "open" or "closed" is made by the Community Foundation.
- If an organization received an award in one grant cycle, it must skip two (2) years (3 grant cycles) before it can apply again for another project (and the grant for which it previously received funding must be closed). Example: An agency that received a grant in Fall 2008 will be ineligible to apply until Fall 2010, and then only if the Fall 2008 grant is closed as determined by the Community Foundation.
- Organizations may not resubmit a proposal for a project or program which had been previously declined by the Community Foundation.

Grant award decisions will be announced approximately eight weeks after submission deadlines.

Does My Organization Qualify?

- The Community Foundation seeks to invest in programs, innovation, and the organic growth of agencies and the services that they provide, and will consider requests from any 501(c)(3) where the benefit of a Community Foundation grant will accrue significantly (but not necessarily exclusively) to residents of the Foundation's service area: **Broome, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Otsego and/or Tioga counties**. The Foundation may also consider requests from certain local government agencies, municipalities and public school systems within the Foundation's service area, provided that the proposed project fits the Foundation's criteria for consideration. The determination as to whether a proposed project, or agency, fits the Foundation's criteria for consideration is made by the Community Foundation.
- In 2010, the Foundation invites proposals submitted in one of four categories:

- **Program** – proposals that address a specific program need which, if funded, will create or strengthen that program.

or

- **Capital** – proposals for property purchase, equipment purchase, facilities improvement, and capital campaigns (Please note: the Foundation only considers proposals for capital campaigns when the organization has already achieved commitments for 75-80% of the total funding).

*(Note: Requests for purchase of new or replacement equipment **routinely** used by the organization – for example, office equipment, team sports equipment, highway equipment, construction equipment – are not considered.)*

or

- **Organizational capacity-building** (Note: may be capital project or program) – proposals that address a specific agency/organizational need which, if funded, will significantly improve the organization's long-term ability to deliver its programs and/or its long-term outlook for sustainability.

*(Note: Requests for replacement of routinely used computer or office equipment or upgrading of routinely used software are not considered. Requests for new computer software (and hardware, if required by the software) may be considered, **but** agencies should make a strong case for need and explain why and how the specific software/hardware being proposed will meet that need and improve the agency's capacity for the long-term. Requests for salary for new staff positions are not considered unless realistic, viable plans for sustaining the position once grant funding has ended are also submitted.)*

or

- **Operating Support** – Proposals from established organizations (minimum of 10 years) that are in financial distress due to a reduction in traditional funding sources for operations (e.g. individual contributions, event revenue, federal/state/local budget reductions). If a proposal is submitted under such circumstances, please address long-term sustainability plans in your narrative.
- Grants will be awarded in the amount of \$1,000 to \$15,000.
- The Community Foundation may award less than the amount requested, and will also consider providing matching or challenge grants. Any expenses incurred prior to a grant being awarded are not reimbursable.
- If a grant is awarded, the grant period is two (2) years from the date of the award. During this time, the organization is expected to submit periodic status reports as defined in the grant contract (usually at 6 and 12 months after award and a final report at 24 months, unless other arrangements have been made with the Program Officer).

These reports are separate from any narrative information submitted in support of Requests for Payment.

We Invite Proposals That:

- Address a specific need
- Adopt a practical approach to community problems
- Promote cooperation among agencies with similar programs
- Demonstrate that the grant investment will result in attainable and measurable outcomes
- Incorporate a plan for tracking predicted outcomes and evaluating the results of funded programs/projects.

We Do Not Consider Requests For:

- Funding to reimburse an organization for costs that were incurred prior to the date the grant was awarded.
- Operating or program deficits
- Funding to pay existing mortgages
- Grants to individuals
- Funding for individual musical/theatrical productions or performances
- Funding in support of special events, such as music or arts festivals, conference sponsorships, workshops, etc., unless there is a realistic, actionable plan for follow-up activities or sustainability.
- Scholarships
- Funding to churches or other organizations for religious purposes
- Funding to organizations that have so many counterparts (e.g. scout troops, ambulance squads, volunteer or municipal fire departments, individual schools within a school district, individual school classrooms, PTAs) that it would be difficult to assess the relative merits of similar proposals.

***Reminder:** Please call the Foundation offices before preparing a proposal to confirm that your project qualifies for consideration.*

Proposal Format:

- One or two-sided typed or word-processed sheets, white paper, each page numbered in order
- 1" margins on all sides
- No smaller than a 12-point font
- Proposals must be submitted as printed ("hard") copies, except for one electronic version of the Executive Summary and Proposal Narrative (in MS Word or Adobe Acrobat format) to be used internally by the Program Officer (see checklist on page 8).

Proposals should consist of (in this order):

- Contact Information Form (may be downloaded from the Foundation's web site: www.cfscny.org), legibly printed by hand or completed on a typewriter. **Note: Proxy signatures are not acceptable on this form.**

- One-page Executive Summary (on a separate sheet, **not** agency letterhead, but **do** type your agency's name on the top of the page):
 - Using a bulleted format, in one sentence for each bullet, state the amount of your request, why the money is needed, and for what it will be used.
 - In one or two paragraphs *on the same page* give a very brief overview of your proposed project or program: its goals, the strategies and activities you plan to implement to achieve your goals, and the outcomes you expect to achieve (that is, what will change as a result of your undertaking this project/program?).

Please limit the Executive Summary to one page.

- Narrative six (6) pages maximum, seven (7) for capital or operating support proposals (except see bulleted point under #2, below) answering the numbered questions listed below.
 - **NOTE: If your proposal is for a capital/equipment project or capital campaign, even if submitted in the organizational capacity- building category, please answer all questions except #9.**
 - **If your proposal is not for a capital/equipment project or capital campaign, please skip questions #14, 15, and 16.)**
 - **For proposals requesting operational support, you may skip questions #14, 15, and 16, but you must respond to all other questions.**

Please number your responses to match the specific number of each question (if a question is not applicable, enter the number followed by "NA" and keep the sequence in proper order). You do not have to repeat the questions:

1. What is your organization's **mission** and **target population**?
2. What **need** will the project address, and how was the need determined?
 - If your organization is **not** headquartered or located in the Community Foundation's service area (Broome, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Otsego or Tioga counties), you **must** answer the following additional questions. (*You may take an additional page, if needed, to answer these questions, for a total narrative length of seven [eight for capital projects or operating support] pages.*)
 - a) How did you ascertain that there is a specific need for this program or project within the area served by the Community Foundation?
 - b) What other agencies in or outside the Foundation's service area are addressing this need within our region, and how will your program/project differ from theirs?
 - c) What other programs or projects have you carried out within the Community Foundation's service area, and what were their outcomes?
3. **Who**, and **how many**, will be served by this project? In what geographic area(s)?
4. What **objectives** (outputs) will the program or project accomplish? (In asking this question, the Foundation is looking for specific, targeted numbers – for example, the numbers of people you expect to serve; people helped, activities held, materials distributed, etc.)
5. What **outcomes** do you expect as a result of this project? (i.e. What will change as a result of this project? Be as specific as you can; quantify if possible). What impact will the project have on your organization, clients, and the community? How will you track

success over time? (i.e. How will you monitor your progress toward achieving your desired outcome(s)?)

6. **Personnel:** Who will lead this project and what are their qualifications? Who are the key people who will deliver the service(s)? What volunteer support do you anticipate, and how will it be managed?
7. What predicts **your organization's success** with this project? For example, describe similar programs undertaken and past accomplishments. What have you achieved over the past 1 - 3 years for persons in other programs run by your agency? If possible, provide specific and measurable examples of results achieved.
8. **Evaluation:** How will you evaluate this project? What evaluative information will you provide to the Foundation in your reports? (Reports are generally due at six (6) months, twelve (12) months and at 24 months and/or project completion.)
9. How will you **sustain** this project/program once the grant funding has ended? (**NOTE: this question does not apply for capital/equipment projects**)
10. How would you characterize the **sustainability** of your organization? Please address financial and programmatic factors, both positive and negative (see also questions #17-20 for **operating support** proposals).
11. What is your **communications plan** for this project? How will you communicate your project success to other interested parties (e.g. clients, peers, media, and professional associations)?
12. **Coordination (NOTE: this question may not apply for capital/equipment projects):**
 - Are there other organizations in your community addressing this issue? If so, have you coordinated with them on this project?
 - If not, why not? How does your project differ from other efforts that may seem similar?
 - If you have coordinated with others, please include as attachments to your proposal any Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or letters of collaboration.
 - If no coordination anticipated (e.g. with a capital project) enter "NA" as a response to this question.
13. **Other funding:**
 - What other sources have you applied to for funding for this project, how much have you requested, and what have been the results to date? Please list other foundations, individual or corporate pledges/donations of \$1,000 or more and/or gifts-in-kind.
 - How will you raise any remaining funds required?
 - If the Foundation partially funds your proposal request, what will be the impact on the project or program?

NOTE: The following three (3) questions only need to be answered for capital projects, equipment purchases, and/or capital campaigns:

14. What are the **results** you commit to achieving with this improvement in place? Please specifically detail the ways in which the improvement makes you more **efficient** (e.g. reducing time and costs) and/or **effective** (i.e. multiplying the gains from your program and/or increasing the numbers of the persons who get them).

15. What are the **implications** of this improvement for **revenues and for costs**? If the improvement creates higher costs than revenues, how will you pay for them?
16. Will this new capital project require any **change in approach** for the organization or **change in job performance** by staff to be fully successful? If so, please detail these changes and note commitments made to make them, including any required training.

NOTE: The following four (4) additional questions should be answered **only** for requests for **operating support**:

17. Have **revenue streams** to your organization been negatively impacted by recent local, state, and/or nationwide financial developments? How?
18. What **actions** has your organization taken to **adapt** to reduced revenue streams?
19. Has your organization seen an **increase in the need** for your services or a **shift** in the kinds of programs/services that are needed? If so, please describe.
20. Describe any additional **funding gaps** (e.g. reduction in fundraised money, foundation support, ticket sales, etc.) your organization is currently experiencing.

NOTE: The following documentation is also required as attachments to **each** of the **fifteen (15) printed copies of your proposal**:

- A list of board members and officers, their addresses, and board meeting schedule.
- A **project/program** budget (one page maximum) detailing **expenses** and **all sources of income, including potential grants and/or fund-raising expectations**.
 - **Note:** If your request is for **purchase of equipment**, please show evidence that competitive pricing has been explored (for example, model numbers, prices, sources/stores, or advertisements). If a more competitive price has been rejected by your agency, please explain why.
 - **Note:** If your request is for **construction**, a photocopy of at least one quote or estimate from a construction firm or builder must be included. In addition, the agency should make a diligent effort to get **two** quotes prior to submitting the proposal, advising the Foundation in the proposal if that is not possible and why.
- An **organizational** operating budget (two pages maximum) showing departmental **income** (revenues) and **expenses** for the year in which the project will be carried out. If the organizational operating budget is not yet available for that year, submit the income/expense budget for the current year along with year-to-date actuals for comparison purposes. *(If you are not clear as to what constitutes an organizational operating budget, please contact the Foundation's program officer for clarification at (607) 772-6773 prior to submitting your proposal.)*

NOTE: The following documentation is also required

- **One** copy of your 501(c)(3) IRS exemption letter (not applicable to public agencies).
- **One** bound copy of your agency's most recent audit (if your agency undergoes an audit. Not applicable to public agencies.)
- **One** copy of your organization's by-laws.

Submit **fifteen (15)** full copies of your proposal and attachments, including the Contact Information Form and Executive Summary (which should be the first two pages of your

proposal). **In addition, submit eight (8)** additional stapled or clipped copies of just the Contact Information Form and the Executive Summary. **Note, however,** that only *one* (1) copy each of your 501(c)(3), your audit, and your by-laws is required. One (1) electronic copy of the Executive Summary and Proposal Narrative (in MS Word or Adobe Acrobat format) should be submitted via either e-mail (to: Jensen@stny.rr.com) or on a CD-ROM.

Please do not submit additional materials – including cover letters, photos, diagrams, etc. – unless asked for such material at the time of your initial phone call (or subsequent calls) to the Foundation. Please do not use binders, folders or report covers for individual copies of proposals. But please **do** staple or clip together the pages of each individual copy of your proposal; this is to ensure that each of the reviewers receives a complete proposal packet.

*(Note: If your project is a capital building or renovation project and you have photos or architectural drawings of the project, please submit only **one** copy of each appropriate photo or drawing with your proposal.)*

Tips to applicants:

- Please use the check sheet on page 8 (which does not have to be submitted with your application) to make sure that all required pieces of your proposal are included in your packet and that all application instructions have been followed.

Occasionally, agencies will realize after they have mailed the proposal package that an attachment or other information is missing. Any deficiencies due to missing information may be corrected as long as the materials are received in our office by 5:00 P.M. on the day of the deadline. The responsibility for correcting such deficiencies prior to the deadline rests with the applicant agency, and not the Foundation.

- Please double-check to ensure that you have included a copy of your agency's 501(c)(3) IRS Letter of Determination, and not a copy of your agency's NYS tax exempt form or your agency's Certificate of Incorporation. Only a copy of a current 501(c)(3) will be accepted as proof of nonprofit status. (Not applicable to public agencies.)
- You may find it helpful to have someone unfamiliar with your project (or even your agency) read through your proposal before submitting it to the Community Foundation. A read-through by a disinterested lay person can provide a totally fresh perspective on a proposal's effectiveness and will often reveal areas of potential confusion, as well as sections where more information or clarification might be needed.

“Begin with the end in mind.” – Stephen Covey

We will be happy to answer any questions you may have about submission procedures or the proposal process. Please contact Robert Jensen, Program Officer, at 607-772-6773 or via e-mail: jensen@stny.rr.com

Checklist for Agency Use in Preparing Proposals for Submission:

My agency:

- is a 501(c)(3) or a local government agency, municipality or public school system, **and**
- has called the Community Foundation to confirm agency/project eligibility

I have prepared and included the:

- Contact Information Form (which has been signed by the executive director or a board officer)
- Executive Summary (1 page only)
- Narrative of 6 (7 if capital project/capital campaign or operating support) pages maximum. (If your agency is located outside our 6-county region, 7 pages or 8 if capital project/capital campaign or operating support request)
- Attachments, including:
 - List of board members, their addresses, meeting schedule
 - Project budget (including all sources of income/other grants applied for)
 - Evidence of competitive pricing for equipment; two (2) quotes for construction
 - Organizational operating budget and Y-T-D actuals for current year

I have submitted one copy of:

- My organization's 501(c)(3) IRS exemption letter, if applicable
- My organization's most recent audit, **bound** (if your agency undergoes an audit)
- My organization's by-laws

I have photocopied, prepared, and submitted:

- Fifteen (15) stapled or clipped copies of the full proposal, including Contact Information Form, Executive Summary, Narrative, and attachments, *in that order*, **plus**
- Eight (8) stapled copies of just the Contact Information Form and the Executive Summary, **plus**
- One (1) electronic ("soft") copy of the Executive Summary and Proposal Narrative (in MS Word or Adobe Acrobat format) via e-mail (to: Jensen@stny.rr.com) or on a CD-ROM

I have removed from the submission packet before mailing:

- Any cover letters, photos/drawings (unless a capital project), press releases, news stories, state tax-exempt certifications, copies of incorporation papers, or other material not requested by the Foundation.

I have sent or delivered my packet so that it arrives in the Foundation offices before 5:00 P.M. on the proposal submission deadline date.

- Yes
- No (Proposals not **received** in Foundation offices by the deadline will not be considered.)

Note: Information relating to your agency or application is sometimes shared at a professional level with other funders or oversight agencies. The Community Foundation may also occasionally notify donor advisors to special funds held at the Foundation when a grantmaking opportunity at an applicant agency arises which is appropriate to the donors' interests. Grants declined by the Community Foundation are not made public.