



2025 Critical Needs Response Initiative Grant Guidelines

OUR VISION

Thriving Philanthropy, Thriving Communities. We believe where philanthropy increases, communities thrive.

OUR MISSION

Promoting philanthropy to advance the well-being of our communities forever.

PURPOSE

This is a rapid response grant of the Princeton Area Community Foundation made possible with funding from the Critical Needs Response Initiative, and contributing funds from The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, and The Bonner Foundation.

This fund, established in November of 2025, responds to funding deficits created by the recent SNAP crisis, ongoing policy/funding challenges, government shutdowns, continuing closures, and related pressures on nonprofit organizations within the Community Foundation's geographic footprint.

WHAT WE WILL CONSIDER

We will consider funding requests that seek gap funding to restore deficits created by the current crisis. Funding will aim to improve the sustainability of nonprofits working directly to address critical needs, bolster support, increase access, and lift-up populations most impacted by poverty such as low-income families and seniors, children, and adolescents.

Grants will prioritize organizations working directly with communities experiencing food insecurity and/or other critical, emergent needs, and addressing constraints that affect the social safety net of residents in the region.

Funding decisions are approved by the Community Foundation's Board, based upon the recommendation of the Committee on Impact, a team that reviews and evaluates all applications.

THE APPLICATION

Question(s)	Description
Briefly describe your organization's mission	To be eligible for consideration, your organization's mission must be focused on alleviating or addressing a root cause of poverty that impacts children, adults, and families within our geographic footprint. Your organization's history of serving economically disadvantaged populations will be considered.
The need in the community	Share how you have identified the current need in the local community.
What your organization realistically needs	We typically receive more applications than we can support. While we are not setting a funding cap for each request, funding decisions will be made based on available funding. Please identify the specific dollar amount needed. Describe how you are responding to an emerging need. Include information about who you will serve. The need must be focused on alleviating hardships and addressing populations most impacted by shifting policies beyond their control, including food insecurity and/or other emergent needs. Requests should focus on alleviating constraints that affect the social safety net of individuals in the region.
Use of funds	This is a one-time, rapid response grant. Describe how the funds will help close the gap created as a result of emerging challenges faced by your organization. How will you use the funds?
Support Documents	Board List. Please include a Board roster, identifying officers.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

An applicant must have tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Service Code, be a publicly supported charity under Section 509, and be registered with the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs as a charity in good standing.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/charities/Pages/FAQ.aspx>

To check your status, you may visit: <https://njconsumeraffairs.nj.gov/public-charity-search-results/>

Applications will be accepted from organizations that operate and provide services within the geographic region covered by the Community Foundation, defined as follows:

- Mercer County
- Eastern Bucks County, PA, including New Hope, Morrisville, Washington Crossing and Yardley
- Northern Burlington County, including Bordentown and Bordentown Township
- Southern Hunterdon County, including Lambertville, West Amwell, adjacent parts of East Amwell
- Southern Middlesex County, including Plainsboro and Cranbury
- Southern Somerset County, including Montgomery, Rocky Hill, and adjacent sections of Franklin Twp.

View a map of our region by [clicking here](#).

WHAT WE DO NOT FUND

- Services outside the above stated geographic region
- Statewide organizations unless the organization maintains a physical office within the CF's geographic footprint and serves residents within same
- Endowment-building campaigns
- Fundraising appeals, events, and routine expenses associated with fundraising
- Field trips, unless part of a larger educational effort
- Scholarships for higher education
- Organized sports teams or sports leagues
- Pre-college private or independent schools
- Sponsorships or conventions
- Lobbying and other political activities
- Fraternal and religious activities
- Tax-supported and government-operated basic programs and services (e.g., core curricular school activities or essential police and fire services)

SELECTION CRITERIA

Your proposal:

- Fits within the Critical Needs Response Grant guidelines
- Rationale that is clear and compelling
- Is clear about the outcomes to be achieved to make meaningful impact
- Leverages partnerships for efficiencies and greater reach
- Aligns with the mission, growth, and future success of your organization

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The Community Foundation is committed to improving the quality of life of the most vulnerable in our regional footprint and collaborating with community organizations that embrace diversity as a value and practice. Achieving diversity requires an enduring

commitment to inclusion, fully expressed in the organization's culture, values, norms and behaviors. We will support a commitment to diversity in all its forms, encompassing but not limited to age, race, gender identity, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, and disability.

**How Grants
Are
Announced**

The Community Foundation first notifies all applicants of its decision by email and then posts a full listing on its website. Grantees are encouraged to publicize their awards through press releases, social media, newsletters, websites, and annual reports, and to acknowledge support from the Community Foundation. Our VP of Communications, Michelle Sahn, can help your organization with this.

**A MESSAGE
ABOUT THE
POST-GRANT
AWARD
PROCESS**

We expect to receive more requests for grants than we can fund. While we may need to decline requests, we are always seeking to learn more about applicants and establish understand how we might best support and nurture ongoing relationships. We may reach out to better understand your organization's mission and services to make informed decisions today and in the future.

Follow Up: A member of our staff may reach out to you with questions related to your application, seeking to learn more about your proposal and/or emerging needs in the community.

Award Decisions: Grant awards are recommended by the Committee on Impact and approved by the Board of the Community Foundation.

Use of Grant Funds: Grantees should notify the Community Foundation if the grant intent, activities proposed or circumstances of the organization change and the use of funding is no longer applicable.

Reporting Requirements: Grantees are required to submit a brief end-of-grant narrative highlighting lessons learned, future changes, and any unintended consequences. We seek to learn about the impact nonprofit partners can have with this funding. Partner feedback and context about results achieved helps us to determine how to best align future funding. Missing grantee narratives impact our ability to consider new requests for funding.

Non-Discrimination: The Community Foundation supports projects that promote inclusiveness and do not discriminate based on race, gender, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, national origin, disability, or any other characteristics protected by law.