



2026 Community Impact Grants

Grant Guidelines

OUR VISION

Thriving Philanthropy, Thriving Communities. When we work together towards a common goal to achieve impact, opportunity and shared prosperity, we see thriving communities.

OUR MISSION

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

OVERVIEW

The Community Foundation (CF) is dedicated to the people who reside in our region - a geographic footprint spanning Mercer County and the most immediate borders of our neighboring communities. We are committed to philanthropic efforts that provide opportunities to individuals, especially children, to reach their full potential. Our goal is to foster a vibrant and engaged community where opportunity and well-being are shared equally by all our neighbors.

The Community Impact Grants (CIG) program is a responsive funding opportunity made possible by the Community Impact Grant Fund, with additional contributions from Johnson and Johnson, The Burke Foundation, and generous individuals. There will be one Community Impact Grant cycle in 2026. We will consider funding requests from nonprofit organizations that increase access and lift-up individuals and families living in poverty in our region, including immigrants. Grants help to support organizations working to address priority areas identified below. Funding decisions are approved by the CF's Board, based upon the recommendation of the Committee on Impact, a team that reviews and evaluates all applications.

We prioritize organizations that are deeply rooted in the communities they serve, led by or in close partnership with people who share the lived experience of those communities, and recognized by community members as trusted and enduring partners in their well-being. We prioritize initiatives that support economic mobility, specifically addressing systemic barriers to services or

sustainable, livable wages in high-participation sectors, including frontline healthcare and other high-demand industries.

WHAT WE WILL CONSIDER

The Community Foundation accepts requests for funding that support organizations within the following priority areas:

Education and Workforce Development – Support for initiatives that enhance academic achievement and career readiness, including before/after school and early childhood programs, tutoring, and arts education. This priority also includes initiatives that create pathways to high-demand careers in healthcare, as well as initiatives that provide “upskilling” and clear career ladders for frontline healthcare workers and those in high-growth industries that drive our regional economy, supporting occupational mobility for residents in our regional footprint.

Community and Capacity Building – Support for initiatives that enhance the operational excellence, strategic alignment, and collective resilience of the nonprofit ecosystem for organizations working with other nonprofits.

Critical Needs – Support for nonprofits that provide essential resources for those navigating economic transitions or hardship:

- **Food Security** – Support for nonprofits that collect and distribute fresh and perishable food resources and initiatives that help people find and access food resources.
- **Homelessness** – Support for nonprofits that prevent displacement or alleviate homelessness by providing emergency assistance, shelter and/or service-enriched housing.
- **Mental Health** – Support for nonprofits that increase access to culturally-attuned and multi-lingual behavioral health services, ensuring care is accessible regardless of their background or primary language.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Your electronic application must include the following:

1. Organization name
2. Executive Director name, tenure, and contact info
3. Geographic area served / service area
4. Mission statement
5. Organization Info / update(s) and ACH
6. Challenges
7. Organization’s total operating budget

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| 8. Funding sources | 16. The need in the local community |
| 9. Fiscal sponsor agreement
(if applicable) | 17. Target population and reach |
| 10. Priority area | 18. Outcome(s) |
| 11. Project name and description | 19. Strategic plan |
| 12. Staff partners | 20. Annual report |
| 13. Municipalities where services will be
provided | 21. Board list |
| 14. Amount requested | 22. Most recent Form 990 |
| 15. Project budget (upload) | 23. Fiscal sponsor agreement (if
applicable) |

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Organizations who received a two-year grant in 2025 are not eligible to apply in 2026.

- Applicants must be tax-exempt and recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a public charity as described in sections 501(c)(3) and 509(a)(1), (2), or (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- Applicants also should be registered with the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs as a charity in good standing. For more info, please visit their Frequently Asked Questions webpage [here](#). To check your status, you may visit [click here](#).
- 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.

Applications will be accepted from organizations that operate and provide services within the geographic region covered by the Princeton Area 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 Monroe, Cranbury, and Plainsboro
- 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 has demonstrated a significant commitment to CF's region.
- Scholarships for higher education
- Pre-college private or independent schools
- Organized sports teams or sports leagues
- Building renovations
- Fundraising appeals, event sponsorships or festivals
- Lobbying and other political activities
- Fraternal and religious activities
- Tax-supported and government-operated basic programs and services, such as core curricular school activities, and essential police and fire services

SELECTION CRITERIA

Your proposal:

- Fits within the Community Impact Grant guidelines and your organization's mission.
- Rationale is clear and compelling
- Implementation plan / goals are achievable
- Success would have a meaningful impact on the community / population served
- Budget and financial resources allow you to carry out the proposal

Grant Information Session: There will be a virtual Grant Information Sessions on **Wednesday, May 20 from 10:00am – 11:00am**. Applicants are encouraged to attend and ask questions. This session highlights key aspects of the grant guidelines and application process. Attendance is not a prerequisite to apply; however, to attend the information session, registration is required and only granted to organizations eligible to apply. To register, please visit the Community Impact Grants webpage.

Site Visits: Follow-up questions and virtual site visits may be part of the application process. Our rationale for requesting a site visit may include the following:

- To build a relationship with your organization
- To understand the impact your organization has in our community
- To learn more about your organization's programs and/or needs in the community.

Award Decisions: Grant awards are funded by the Community Impact Grant Fund at the Princeton Area Community Foundation. They are distinct from other discretionary grants awarded by the CF. CIG grant awards are recommended by the Committee on Impact for approval to the Board of the Community Foundation.

Grant Announcements: 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 CF. For assistance or advice in how best to acknowledge grants, please contact Michelle Sahn, VP of Communications, at msahn@pacf.org or at (609) 219-1800.

Post Grant Process: We expect to receive more requests for Community Impact Grants than we can fund. While we may need to decline requests, we are always seeking to learn more about applicants and establish supportive and communicative relationships. We may reach out to better understand your organization’s mission and services to make informed decisions today and in the future.

Reporting Requirements: Grantees are required to submit a brief end-of-grant narrative highlighting lessons learned, future changes, measurements and results. 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.

Use of Grant Funds: Grantees may be required to return grant funds if unable to carry out the work as described in the proposal. Grantees should notify the CF if needs or circumstances change.

Non-Discrimination: The CF 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.

Key Dates for 2026

- Tuesday, May 5 Application opens
- Wednesday, May 20 Virtual Grant Info Session 10am – 11:00am
- Wednesday, June 17 Requests due at 12:00pm noon
- October 2026 Award and decline notices sent
- October 2026 Payment sent