

Iowa West Foundation's Grants Policies & Procedures

The Iowa West Foundation strives for communities where families love to live, and businesses thrive. To accomplish this vision, the foundation uses a variety of tools, including an open grants program. The grants program supports priorities identified by our southwest Iowa residents. Through thousands of ideas shared in community Imagine Hour listening sessions, four core ideas defined a community vision of success. Together they form a picture of a vibrant, successful community. They are:

1. **Belonging** – Everyone in the community experiences a deep sense of being included and appreciated.
2. **Financial stability** – The community is rooted in meeting all residents' basic needs and beyond.
3. **Opportunity** – High quality opportunities are available to pursue personal achievement.
4. **Well-being** – Individuals have the opportunity to thrive, not just survive.

Grant Program Eligibility

1. **Organizations** – Iowa West Foundation grants to public charities and governmental entities.
 - **Schools & School District Eligibility:** Individual schools are not eligible to apply for grant support, however we do partner with districts on transformational investments through our initiative process. Transformational projects typically help a district to launch a new program / facility that will achieve a significant advance in specific learning outcomes.
 - **Good Standing:** Eligibility for new grant consideration or renewal of funding relies on a past recipient being in good standing with the Iowa West Foundation. Good standing means that all current grants are in compliance (meeting all award conditions) and that reporting is complete and current. If the Foundation has provided notice of specific concerns, a partner is not considered to be in good standing unless those concerns have been satisfactorily addressed.
2. **Geography** – As a place-based foundation, we are organized to serve the interests of residents of southwest Iowa. We do so by providing grant funding to a limited geographic area (please see map).
 - **Iowa funding:** Our Iowa footprint includes 14 counties. Our primary funding area is in Pottawattamie County. We also serve communities located in Adams, Audubon, Carroll, Cass, Crawford, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Monona, Montgomery, Page, Shelby, and Taylor counties.
 - **Metro Omaha funding:** We also fund organizations in the Greater Omaha Metropolitan Area that benefit Iowa residents. This can be through the provision of direct services into Iowa or through the operation of regional amenities. We define regional amenities as facilities that can demonstrate an audience that includes Iowa residents, and which do not have equivalents in our Iowa giving area.
3. **Matching Funds** – We seek to create the maximum benefit for our communities with the use of our funds. As a result, we encourage our partners to leverage our grants through matching. Iowa West Foundation will not fund more than 50% of the eligible costs of completing the proposed work. Grant applications to the Iowa West Foundation with higher matches are viewed more favorably by our Grants Review Committee.
 - **In-kind matching:** many of our nonprofit partners make use of in-kind contributions to implement their projects and programs. We see strong value in partnerships that support these non-cash contributions. We will consider in-kind contributions for up to 15% of the total eligible budget as a match to our funds. In-kind contributions may exceed this amount but will not be considered for match purposes.

How to Apply

Eligible organizations interested in applying to Iowa West Foundation - We encourage you to familiarize yourself with our grants program through the Iowa West Foundation's website. We strive to remove barriers to access when possible. We are available to discuss application ideas before you apply. We will do our best to identify strengths and challenges as well as to make suggestions on how to make the strongest case for support.

1. **Letter of Inquiry** – The first formal step of the application process is to [log-in](#) to our grants management system and complete a letter of inquiry (LOI) form. First-time applicants will need to create an account. Return applicants can login [here](#).

We accept LOIs year-round. The date you submit will determine in which grant cycle your application will be considered (please see schedule). The LOI is used by Iowa West Foundation to confirm your eligibility and screen out any applications that are incompatible with established approaches / policies / practices. If there are any areas of concern, a member of the Grants Team will call you to discuss.

Grant Cycles	Cycle	Letter of Inquiry Due	Completed Application Due	Notification of Awards
	1	January 1	January 15	4 th Week in March
	2	May 1	May 15	4 th Week in July
	3	September 1	September 15	4 th Week in November

Any dates falling on a weekend or national holiday will be moved to the next working day. All materials are due by 11:59 PM on the dates indicated.

Letters of inquiry are accepted year-round. The due date is the final date they will be accepted for a specific cycle.

2. **Application** - Once your Letter of Inquiry is approved by the Iowa West Foundation, you will receive a link with an invitation to complete the full grant application. The e-mail is sent from grantinfo@iowawestfoundation.org. Even without the link, you can log-in to our grants management system to see the status of your application at any time.

All the information completed through the LOI process is automatically transitioned into the application. You will not need to resubmit it. Applications are due by 11:59 PM on the filing date for the cycle.

Please note: Changes to your budget or information you provided as part of the LOI may turn an eligible request into an ineligible one. If you are planning to make significant changes, we encourage you to contact the grants team to discuss the impact of those changes.

[Download a copy of our application.](#)

3. **Meeting to discuss grant application** – We try to meet with every applicant. We want everyone to have the opportunity to make their case. Staff will reach out following the submission of your application to schedule a time to speak with you. These conversations are often conducted in-person at your offices, though depending on distance or other factors, they may be conducted virtually or by telephone. We

attempt to keep these meetings as casual as possible, and then to clarify our understanding of your application.

4. **Notification** - Approximately three months after an application is submitted, we notify all grant applicants of funding decisions. Not all applications are funded. If an organization is not funded, a brief explanation will be provided. If you receive a grant, we will organize an opportunity to discuss the award and any related expectations.

Grant Types

Applicants may apply for four distinct types of grants. We consider all resources available to you in determining how much funding to provide – we want to help you bridge the gap between your resources and your goals.

1. **Program Grants** are a form of restricted support. They help a grantee implement a defined project or activity and are tied to specific, project-based outcomes. When considering a program grant application, Iowa West Foundation considers the likelihood that proposed activities will contribute to our four target outcomes. As our outcomes look to long-term community improvement, we tend not to fund projects / programs that are only focused on short-term impacts.
 - If your organization is requesting more than one year of funding, you should provide a clear case as to how the longer commitment supports a stronger impact than a single year commitment would.
 - Renewal of program grants requires your organization be in good standing.
 - As a general practice, grantees who receive more than one renewal should be able to begin to shift from annual reporting to evaluating their data from a longitudinal perspective.
2. **Operating Grants** are a form of unrestricted support. They fund a grantee's overall activities, including administrative functions. Iowa West Foundation supports grantee operations when the overall work of the grantee during the period of support will demonstrate results in our target outcomes.
 - This suggests a strong alignment between the work of the applicant and the goals of the foundation. Typically, it is demonstrated through a combination of a clearly aligned workplan and a track-record of clear results.
 - As a general practice, it is uncommon for Iowa West Foundation to award an operating grant to an organization without first developing a strong relationship through program grants.
 - Operating grants are only available to organizations that own or lease a commercial office space in Pottawattamie County.
 - As a general practice, we typically fund public / governmental entities through program or capital grants rather than general operating grants.
3. **Capital Grants** are restricted grants that support the infrastructure needs of an organization. Typically, this is through the acquisition, construction, or installation of facilities or equipment.
 - Applicants for capital grants should make the case as to why this project will help it fulfill its mission more effectively and align with the Foundation's target outcomes.
 - Competition is important to ensuring strong value in capital projects. Applicants should seek two or more quotes from vendors or contractors.
 - For building improvements or construction, please note that it is a requirement that the applicant own the building or land being improved.
 - As a general practice, Iowa West Foundation does not support deferred or general maintenance. As such, when supporting a capital grant, we try to understand how our applicants have planned for the

continued maintenance, operation, and eventual replacement for what will be purchased through the grant.

4. **Launch Grants** are a type of grant that responds to a frequently heard need from our partner organizations. They are designed to support the creation of needed programs or organizations that are not provided by the existing system. Typically, these include organizations / programs that are in their formative phase. Because they are new, they often entail a higher amount of risk. Iowa West Foundation is only interested in supporting launch grants that are additive rather than duplicating existing services.
- Recognizing that it is unlikely that newer endeavors will show outcomes during the grant period, applicants will be asked to identify important milestones or deliverables that show strong management or progress toward their goal(s).
 - Many of the requests we receive in this category are for a multi-year commitment to give time to establish the new organization / program. In these cases, renewal will be based on the organization being in good standing and showing the anticipated progress.
 - As a general practice, a strong plan and/or understanding of need should precede a grant request. If no plan is in place, Iowa West Foundation may offer support to create a plan before considering the full request.

Contingency Fund

In addition to the four grants described above, the Iowa West Foundation maintains a Contingency Fund to support existing grantees and partners. We know our partners are tackling some of our communities' most significant challenges. As a result, the risk of disruption due to circumstances out of our partners' control is always possible. We want to be active in anticipating and resolving these issues. To do so, we have special funding that is set aside for managing risk. There is no application for the contingency fund. Instead, Iowa West Foundation deploys these funds proactively when we identify an opportunity to help overcome a barrier to our partners' success. Typically, this is through:

- **Capacity building** – When possible, we seek to resolve areas of risk before they become problems. One way to do this is to ensure our partners have the skills and advice they need to be successful. Typically, capacity building opportunities arise from our due diligence and reporting conversations.
- **Grant contingency support** – When an unexpected obstacle arises, we can add additional funds to existing grants to help our partners overcome the challenge. These opportunities are most frequently identified through interim reports or when our partners proactively reach out to share their needs.
- **Emergency funding** – In the lifecycle of a nonprofit there can be moments of vulnerability. During these times, Iowa West Foundation may choose to infuse an organization with emergency operational funding to help weather a period of difficulty.

Ineligible Activities

Iowa West Foundation funds a wide variety of activities through our four outcome areas. There are, however, some requests that we do not consider.

- **Activities that violate your nonprofit status:** The IRS sets out in its code restrictions on what public charities can legally do and maintain their status. We adhere to these restrictions set by the IRS.

- **Discrimination or intolerance:** We promote equitable, inclusive communities and do not fund activities that would result in inappropriate discrimination against any individual or group.
- **Fundraising events:** We do not contribute to endowment campaigns nor support benefits or fundraising events, such as galas, golf tournaments, and school dinners.
- **Medical / Healthcare:** We do not fund the costs associated with medical care. This includes the operations or construction of medical facilities. It also includes grants that address circumstances arising from specific medical conditions.
- **Past costs, debts, or expenses:** We understand that occasionally work on a project must begin prior to our award announcement. However, when we review your proposal budget, we only consider as a match the costs / work you anticipate after we provide notification of an award. Please review our grants cycle timeline to understand which cycle best matches the needs of your project.
- **Public safety facilities/vehicles:** Public safety facilities (police and fire stations) or public safety vehicles are not eligible. We organize our funding in support of public safety equipment through the Pottawattamie County Firefighters Association. For additional information on the equipment program, please contact our Grants Coordinator, Pam Bierce.
- **Regranting programs:** The Iowa West Foundation does not fund programs that sub-award our funding.
- **Religious activities:** Churches and religious organizations are an important part of our community. We support their secular activities, but religious activities are not eligible for our funding. As a result, churches and religious organizations are not eligible for operating grants, or capital grants that support facilities used for religious activities.
- **Sponsorship:** Publications, films, books, seminars, and conferences are not eligible as stand-alone projects. They may only be considered when they directly support eligible programs.
- **Recently Declined Applications:** You may not reapply for a program that was declined in the past 12 months.

Grant Management

- **Disbursements:** Iowa West Foundation looks at a grantee's capacity as well as the needs and risks of a particular grant when issuing disbursements. The schedule for disbursements will be described in the grant agreement. As a general approach, Iowa West Foundation typically issues initial disbursements of 50%, 75%, or 100% of the grant amount. If grantees are facing specific cash flow needs, they are encouraged to discuss this with us.
- **Extension Requests:** We understand that circumstances outside of the control of our grantees may impact their work. As such, we will consider extension requests when appropriate. We prefer not to exceed one extension request per grant as a practice.
- **Terms and Conditions of Awards:** Upon approval of a grant, Iowa West Foundation issues a grant agreement. In addition to any specific requirements, the agreement includes the following terms and conditions:

1. **Eligible Organization:** Grantee confirms that it is an organization that is currently recognized by the Internal Revenue Service (the "IRS") as a public charity under sections 501(c)(3) and 509(a)(1), (2), or (3) of the Internal Revenue Code (the "Code"), or a governmental entity. Additionally, Grantee shall inform the Iowa West Foundation immediately of any change in, or IRS proposed or actual revocation (whether or not appealed) of its tax status described above.
2. **Incorporation of Grant Request:** The grant request proposal submitted by the Grantee to the Foundation is hereby agreed to be an integral part of the Agreement. It is expected that the Grantee will complete the work identified in their application, as restricted by the Special Award Conditions.
3. **Purpose and Use of Funds:** The Grantee agrees that all funding disbursed under this Grant Agreement shall be used exclusively towards the attainment of the proposed activity as described in Grantee's grant request submitted to the Foundation, and subject to any Special Award Conditions described on the cover page.
 - a. Any change to the scope should be discussed with the appropriate grants program officer.
 - b. If at any time the Grantee should determine that achievement of the stated objectives is no longer feasible, for any reason, the Grantee agrees to notify the Foundation in writing immediately to initiate discussion on steps to be taken.
4. **Leveraging Funds:** The funding granted through this Agreement is based on a percentage of the expected project cost, per the Grantee's application. If the project or program decreases in size or scope post-award, the Foundation-funded portion may not exceed the approved percentage, without prior Foundation approval.
5. **Unexpended Funds:** The Iowa West Foundation may request that Grantee return any unexpended grant funds remaining at the end of the project period.
6. **Misuse of Funds:** Grantee accepts responsibility for complying with this Agreement's terms and conditions and will exercise full control over the grant and the expenditure of grant funds.
 - a. Grant funds may not be used for activities or purposes prohibited in the Grant Eligibility and Restrictions section of the Iowa West Foundation Policies and Procedures (www.iowawestfoundation.org/grantmaking).
 - b. Nor may funds be used for any activity or purpose prohibited by the Internal Revenue Code (such as insurance/private benefit) or other state/federal law.
7. **Term of Agreement:** This Agreement is effective during the time period specified under the Term of Agreement, unless terminated earlier in accordance with this Agreement. It is agreed that all activities financed with Foundation funds (including for the purposes of calculating the grantee match) will be completed within the period of the grant unless Iowa West Foundation provides approval of an extension in writing.
8. **Termination:** The Foundation reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to discontinue funding if it is not satisfied with the progress of the grant, the content of any required written report, if grant

performance standards are not met, or if Grantee spends grant proceeds for purposes other than those approved by the Foundation.

- a. In the event of discontinuation or at the close of the grant, any unexpended funds shall immediately be returned to the Foundation, except where the Foundation has agreed in writing to an alternative use of the unused funds.*
 - b. The Grantee also agrees to repay any funds that the Foundation determines to be misspent pursuant to the terms of the agreement. Further, the Foundation may terminate grant disbursements during the grant period if grant performance standards (activities and outputs) are unmet.*
- 9. **Modification:** The Foundation may amend the grant Agreement from time to time. Modifications may be initiated by the Foundation or at the request of the Grantee. In either event, the final approval of the modification shall be issued in writing by the Foundation.*
- 10. **Ownership of Intellectual Property:** All reports generated and data collected during this grant shall be considered the joint property of the Grantee and Foundation. This provision extends to third party evaluations conducted for the purposes of the grant and/or as may be required in this Agreement.*
- 11. **Performance Management:** The Foundation will use a variety of mechanisms to stay informed of the Grantee's performance under the grant, and of general progress toward attainment of the grant objectives. These may include:*
- a. Feedback from key partners*
 - b. Site visits by grants program officers*
 - c. Meetings to review and assess periodic work plans and progress reports*
 - d. Impact Reports*

During the grant period, Grantee agrees to permit the Foundation or its designated agent to inspect Grantee's premises, facilities, or the project where the grant is utilized. Grantee shall maintain records of receipts and expenditures involving the award and to make all related books and records available to the Foundation upon request.

- 12. **Financial / Progress Reporting:** The Grantee agrees to submit required financial and progress reports ("Impact Report") to the Foundation. Grantee will be advised if an interim Impact Report is also required. The final Impact Report on use of funds and grant outcomes is due no later than 30 days after the contract expiration date and may be submitted early if the grant outcomes are achieved prior to the due date.*

The section 'Data Collection & Reporting Expectations' identifies which metrics are required for the final and interim progress reports. A web-link to an online Impact Report will be made available to grantee by Pam Bierce, Grants Coordinator, who is available to assist at (712) 309-3008 and at grantinfo@iowawestfoundation.org.