

Grant Policy & Application Procedures

For the HCCF Endowment Fund and Unrestricted Endowed Funds of the Community Foundation
(Revised June 2026)

Purpose, Restrictions and Policies on the Distribution of Funds

1. Purpose

The HCCF is interested in funding projects that will improve the quality of life for the citizens of Hillsdale County. Eligible projects generally fall within these categories: education, fine arts, social services, community development, recreation, environmental issues, health and wellness, and improvement in the physical, mental, and moral conditions of Hillsdale County residents. The Foundation aims to support creative approaches to community needs and problems that benefit the widest possible range of people.

2. Eligibility

The Foundation welcomes grant applications from the Hillsdale County area or outside Hillsdale County if a significant number of the people to be served reside within Hillsdale County. Applicants must be tax exempt according to Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, an educational institution, or governmental unit.

3. Funds

In addition to unrestricted endowment funds, there are a number of individual named funds administered by the Foundation as part of its endowment. Many of these are restricted to certain purposes, in accordance with the wishes of the donors.

4. Grant Making Policies

The Foundation gives priority to programs which:

- Reach as many people as possible in the county
- Increase individual access to community resources
- Examine and address the underlying causes of local problems
- Promote personal independence and achievement
- Seek challenge or matching grants
- Attract volunteer resources and support
- Strengthen the private, non-profit sector
- Encourage collaboration with other organizations
- Build the capacity of the applying organization
- Support the start-up of new programs that solve critical local problems or address critical local needs
- Focus on prevention
- Low priority is given to requests for bricks and mortar, and ongoing programs where alternative funding is not planned to carry a program/project forward following a Foundation grant.

The current objectives of the Foundation do not allow grants for:

- Religious or sectarian purposes except for those services provided on a secular basis, which are available to persons without regard to religious preference.
- Individuals
- Legislative or political purposes
- Loans
- Capital campaigns
- Operational costs for maintaining the present operation of an organization, including, but not limited to:
 - Staff salaries, wages and benefits

- Routine maintenance, repair, replacement, or regulatory compliance of existing facilities, equipment or organizational operations
- Education requests that supplant rather than supplement the ongoing operations of the school district such as equipment or education materials, including curriculum supplies and resources.

The Foundation reserves the right to determine whether a request falls within its current funding priorities and objectives.

5. Application Procedures

The Foundation requires applicants to submit a letter of intent via the online portal. If approved, applicants will be invited to submit a full application. ***Foundation staff cannot assess an applicant's chances for approval.*** To be considered for funding, applications and their supporting materials must be uploaded online no later than **4:00 P.M., November 1 or May 1**. There will be no exceptions. The Foundation is not responsible for applications not received due to internet delays or system interruptions. Paper applications will not be accepted.

When submitting an application, applicants must submit the following required attachments:

1. The agency/organization's governing body and the name of the Chief Executive Officer.
2. IRS federal tax exemption letter
3. The agency's current annual income and expense budget or most recent IRS Form 990 4. An itemized project budget

Unfortunately, applications cannot be accepted by HCCF after the time specified above.

Only one grant application per organization will be accepted per grant cycle, with the exception of educational institutions. With a limited number of grant dollars available to address a broad range of needs within the community, the Foundation feels it is in the best interests of everyone if the applicant chooses the project or program with the highest funding priority.

Upon submission, your application and accompanying materials become the property of the HCCF and will be used as deemed appropriate by the Foundation. They may be reviewed with community planning agencies and other individuals and organizations as HCCF assesses the project and its potential community impact. The information may also be shared with other foundations and funding sources which call upon HCCF for information about community projects.

The Hillsdale County Community Foundation reserves the right to request additional information about your organization, the project, added financial details, or to make a site visit before or after grant approval. Grant Committee members carefully evaluate grant applications and present recommendations to the Board of Trustees. The Foundation's Board of Trustees determines which applicants will receive funding based on these recommendations. All applicants are notified in writing shortly following the decision of the Trustees. The Foundation receives far more grant requests than it can fund, so do not be discouraged if you do not receive funding for a particular application.

An organization receiving a grant in one grant cycle is not eligible to apply during the next two grant cycles and may apply for further grants in the third subsequent grant cycle.

Requests for information should be directed to:

Hillsdale County Community Foundation
 2 S. Howell Street • PO Box 276 • Hillsdale, MI 49242 • Phone: (517) 439-5101 • www.abouthccf.org



Confirmed in Compliance with National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations