



2026 Tier 2 Strategic Impact Grant Guidelines

Program Overview

The Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County (CFBMC) launched a multi-tiered grant funding initiative for 2026-2027 to support the growth, resilience, and long-term vitality of Monroe County. Through investments, CFBMC seeks to advance efforts that enhance quality of life, increase livability, attract and retain younger adults and families, and address important community priorities in Monroe County.

With Tier 1 completed, CFBMC is now officially opening the second tier. **Tier 2 Strategic Impact Grants** will support larger, more comprehensive initiatives that advance meaningful programmatic priorities and are positioned to create sustained community impact. Tier 2 is distinct from the Tier 1 Rapid Response Grants, which supported time-sensitive capacity, sustainability, infrastructure, and operational needs. **Tier 2 funding is designed to support programmatic initiatives that address important community needs and opportunities and produce meaningful, sustained benefits for Monroe County residents.**

Purpose and Funding Priorities

Strategic Impact Grants are intended for well-developed projects or programs that address a significant community need or compelling opportunity, have a clear strategy for implementation, and can demonstrate meaningful benefit to Monroe County residents. Organizational capacity-building alone is not the primary focus of this tier of funding. Rather, Tier 2 is intended primarily to support implementation of programmatic strategies that drive positive outcomes. Proposals may support the launch, continuation, expansion, strengthening, or multi-year implementation of programmatic work.

Priority will be given to proposals that demonstrate one or more of the following:

- Innovative approaches or transformative solutions to critical community issues
- A clear and significant benefit for Monroe County residents
- Specific, realistic, and meaningful outcomes that can be assessed over time
- A strong implementation plan supported by appropriate organizational capacity
- Potential for sustained impact beyond the grant period
- Cross-organizational or cross-sector collaboration that increases impact and effectiveness, when collaboration is appropriate to the proposed work

Collaboration is encouraged but is not required. Applicants should describe partnerships only when they are meaningful to the proposed strategy and should clearly identify the roles of participating organizations.

Funding Available

Grant request range	\$50,000 to \$100,000 per proposal
Total funding available	Up to \$750,000
Anticipated number of awards	Approximately 7 to 15, depending on grant amounts and the strength of proposals
Grant funding period	Up to 24 months

CFBMC may award less than the amount requested by an applicant when a reduced award would still allow the proposal to achieve meaningful results. Applicants will be asked to explain whether the work can proceed with partial funding and what adjustments would be necessary.

Eligibility

Applications may be submitted by organizations serving Monroe County, Indiana, including:

- 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations
- Organizations exempt from filing for 501(c)(3) status, including units of government, school corporations, public schools, and religious organizations
- In limited situations, other mission-aligned organizations serving a charitable purpose, including other types of nonprofit and for-profit entities

Religious organizations may apply for programs or projects that are non-proselytizing and do not promote religious doctrine or instruction.

Organizations based outside Monroe County may be eligible when the proposed work will provide a meaningful and identifiable benefit to Monroe County residents. The application should define the Monroe County component of the work, the population to be served, the implementation plan, and the portion of the budget connected to that benefit.

Eligibility questions should be directed to Program Director Marcus Whited at marcus@cfbmc.org.

Ineligible Requests

The Community Foundation does not accept requests for:

- Previously incurred debts or costs incurred before the grant award
- Political campaigns
- Efforts to influence legislation of any governmental body, other than making available the results of nonpartisan analysis, study, or research
- Programs or activities that promote religious doctrine or require participation in religious instruction
- Activities that primarily provide private benefit rather than charitable community benefit
- Requests that are primarily focused on capacity building rather than programmatic advancements.

Eligible Grant Expenses

Direct costs necessary to implement the proposed project or program are eligible. These may include project-related personnel and benefits, contracted services, program materials and supplies, outreach, evaluation, technology, equipment, and other costs clearly connected to the proposed outcomes.

Reasonable administrative and indirect costs may be included when they are necessary to implement the work and are clearly explained in the budget. Tier 2 is not intended primarily for general operating support. Equipment, technology, or facility-related costs may be considered in Tier 2 when they are integral to the larger programmatic strategy and necessary to achieve the proposed outcomes.

Application Process

Applicants must submit the online application through the Community Foundation's grant portal by October 29, 2026 at 11:59pm. One Tier 2 application may be submitted per organization.

Applications may be accessed through CFBMC's online grant portal at:

<https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=cfbmcs>

Timeline

- **September 28, 2026** - Guidelines and online application available
- **October 29, 2026** - Applications are due by 11:59pm
- **Early December 2026** - Award notification, grant agreement preparations, funds available

Application Content

The application is expected to request concise information addressing the following:

- Organization mission, core work, and relevant experience
- A brief proposal summarizing the request, amount, purpose, population served, and anticipated results (or demonstrated results if for an existing initiative)
- The community need or opportunity being addressed and why the work is important now
- The proposed program or project, including the strategy and principal activities
- The specific and identifiable benefit to Monroe County residents
- Implementation timeline, leadership, staffing, and organizational readiness
- Anticipated outcomes and the indicators or information that will be used to assess progress
- Community engagement, partnerships, and collaborator roles, when applicable
- A detailed project budget and explanation of how the request amount was determined
- Plans for sustaining the work or its benefits beyond the grant period, when applicable
- How the organization expects to proceed if the proposal is not funded through this grant cycle
- Whether the proposal can proceed with a partial award and what modifications would be required

Required Attachments

- IRS determination letter or documentation of tax-exempt status, when applicable
- Detailed proposal/project budget
- Current organizational operating budget
- Non-discrimination policy
- Fiscal sponsor documentation, if applicable

CFBMC may request additional financial information, estimates, quotes, partnership documentation, or clarification during the review process. Applicants are encouraged to submit only the materials requested in the application.

Grant Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by CFBMC staff, board members, and community representatives. Because available funding is limited, meeting eligibility requirements does not guarantee funding. Reviewers will consider the following:

- **Alignment with Tier 2 purpose** - The proposal is strategic, programmatic, outcome-driven, and positioned for sustained community impact.
- **Importance of the need or opportunity** - The application clearly explains the issue being addressed, why it matters, and why the proposed work is timely.
- **Community benefit** - The proposal will provide a meaningful and identifiable benefit to Monroe County residents.
- **Strength of strategy** - The proposed approach is clear, thoughtful, and likely to address the identified need or opportunity.
- **Outcomes and learning** - The applicant identifies meaningful results and a practical approach for assessing progress and learning from implementation.
- **Feasibility and readiness** - The work plan, timeline, staffing, partnerships, and requested resources are realistic and sufficient.
- **Organizational capacity** - The applicant demonstrates appropriate leadership, governance, fiscal responsibility, and experience to carry out the work.
- **Collaboration and engagement** - When relevant, the proposal reflects appropriate community input and meaningful collaboration with clearly defined roles.

- **Sustainability** - The applicant has considered how the work or its benefits will be maintained, adapted, or responsibly concluded after grant funding.
- **Budget and financial reasonableness** - The request is appropriate, proportional, clearly explained, and supported by a credible project budget.
- **Overall competitiveness** - The proposal stands out in its relevance, quality, readiness, and potential for significant community impact.

Grant Disbursement and Reporting

Before grant funding is available, the grantee and CFBMC will execute a grant agreement with successful applicants. The agreement will establish the grant period, approved budget, payout schedule, documentation requirements, and reporting expectations. Depending on the nature and duration of the work, grants may be distributed in one or more payments through advances, reimbursements, or a combination of both.

CFBMC will work collaboratively with each grantee to establish a reporting schedule that is appropriate to the project. Multi-year grants may require an interim report or progress conversation in addition to a final report. Reports will generally address:

- Progress toward proposed outcomes and objectives
- Population served and the benefit to Monroe County residents
- What worked well, challenges encountered, and adjustments made
- Use of grant funds compared with the approved budget
- Lessons learned and plans for sustaining the work or its benefits

CFBMC staff may also schedule site visits or conversations to learn about progress and may request photographs or examples of public communications related to the funded work.

Frequently Asked Questions

How many Tier 2 applications may one organization submit?

One Tier 2 application may be submitted per organization.

If an organization applied for or received a Tier 1 grant, is it eligible for Tier 2 funding?

Yes. Organizations may apply for or receive funding in both. The same cost may not be funded twice, and the Tier 2 request should align with Tier 2 priorities.

Is a Tier 1 application required before applying for Tier 2?

No. Tier 1 and Tier 2 are separate competitive grant cycles.

Is general operating support eligible?

Tier 2 is designed primarily for strategic programmatic initiatives rather than general operating support alone. Necessary project-related staffing, administrative, and indirect costs may be included when they are clearly connected to implementation and explained in the budget.

Are staffing costs eligible?

Yes. Project-related staffing costs may be included when clearly connected to implementation of the proposed program. Requests should explain the role of the position or staff time in achieving the proposed outcomes. Tier 2 is not intended primarily to support ongoing staffing costs unrelated to the proposed work.

Are equipment, technology, or facility expenses eligible?

They may be considered when they are integral to the larger programmatic strategy and necessary to achieve the proposed outcomes.

Are costs incurred before the grant award eligible?

No. Grant funds may not be used for costs incurred before a grant is awarded and the grant agreement is executed.

Are partial awards possible?

Yes. Applicants will be asked whether the work can proceed with a partial award and what adjustments would be necessary.

Is collaboration required?

No. Collaboration is a priority when it meaningfully increases impact or effectiveness, but applicants should not create partnerships solely to appear more competitive.

May an organization based outside Monroe County apply?

Yes, when the proposed work provides a meaningful and identifiable benefit to Monroe County residents. The application must clearly define the Monroe County component, population served, and implementation plan, and the portion of the budget associated with that work.

Questions and Applicant Support

Applicants are encouraged to review these guidelines before investing significant time in developing a proposal. Questions regarding eligibility, fit, or process may be directed to Program Director Marcus Whited at marcus@cfbmc.org.

Equal Opportunity in Grantmaking

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity (as defined in paragraph 249(c)(4) of title 18, United States Code), sexual orientation, marital or parental status, political affiliation, military service, physical or mental ability, or any other improper criterion be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity funded in whole or in part with funds made available by the Community Foundation, and any other program or activity funded in whole or in part with funds appropriated for grants, cooperative agreements, and other assistance administered by the Community Foundation.