

African American Community Fund Grant Guidelines

Deadlines: March 1 and October 1 of each year.

E-mail submission required to grants@cfsjc.org.

What is the African American Community Fund?

The African American Community Fund (AACF) is an endowment fund in the Community Foundation of St. Joseph County. Its purpose is to enhance the lives of African Americans in St. Joseph County by providing funding for initiatives that build capacity, influence whole system improvements, and achieve tangible long-term progress.

Primary consideration will be given to programs addressing these priorities:

1) EDUCATION, 2) THE ARTS, 3) LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, and 4) THE SPECIAL CHALLENGES FACING AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES. Up to \$25,000 may be requested. Multi-year funding for exceptional programs and projects may be considered.

What kinds of programs and projects does the African American Community Fund seek to assist?

Ideally, AACF grants will go to 501(c)(3) organizations for projects that...

- Represent a community opportunity that otherwise may go unrealized
- Build capacity
- Promote positive systemic change
- Have "potential" for high impact
- Be highly leveraged, including multiple funding partners
- Pursue clearly defined outcomes, preferably quantifiable and measurable
- Involve planning, research, and advocacy when presented as a necessary component of a larger objective.

Deadlines for Grant Proposals:

Grant requests must be received by email to grants@cfsjc.org no later than **March 1 and October 1** to receive consideration. Deadlines are firm and applicants are responsible for confirming receipt of their application with Foundation staff.

How Does an Organization Apply for an AACF Grant?

The AACF Committee, comprised of a group of local African American leaders, considers grant requests in March and October.

Application materials must be submitted via e-mail to grants@cfsjc.org in word processing format (narrative or budget) or Microsoft Excel (budget). Hard copy applications will no longer be accepted.

Agencies with a special project consistent with the guidelines and priorities described herein must submit the **African American Community Fund Grant Cover Sheet** which briefly addresses the following points:

- The program or project you propose to undertake
- How the project specifically benefits the African American community
- Evaluation of the project and how success is defined
- Other resources, financial or other, that will be accessed for this effort
- Sustainability

The African American Community Fund Grant Cover Sheet is downloadable in Word format at <http://www.cfsjc.org/grantopp/>. The document is a Microsoft Word Form in which the fields expand to accommodate multiple lines of text. Please contact Foundation Program Officer if you experience problems with the document or you need it in another format.

The following are required attachments to the cover sheet:

- Up to 2-page proposal narrative (Word processing format, no PDF documents.)
- Detailed Project Budget (Include sources of revenue & expenses.)
- Current Board Roster with officers identified
- IRS Determination Letter (Only required if not yet on file. Hard copy can be mailed to Foundation if scanned document not available for e-mail.)

The letters of request will be reviewed by the AACF Committee and outstanding requests will be identified for further consideration. Site visits and/or interviews will be conducted at the committee's discretion. Agencies may be asked to submit more information.

It is the responsibility of the grant-seeking organization to submit a complete request. Incomplete requests run the risk of being declined without consideration.

NOTE: A grant request to the African American Community Fund may also be submitted to the Special Project Challenge Grant Fund so long as it meets the challenge grant requirements. In order to do so, a separate proposal needs to be submitted following the Special Project Challenge Grant guidelines obtained on our website at: <http://www.cfsjc.org/grantopp/>.

Notification and Announcement

The AACF Committee's recommendations are submitted to the Community Foundation's board of directors at the April and November board meetings for approval. Applicants are informed immediately thereafter regarding the status of their request. Announcement of the grant awards will be made by the Community Foundation's AACF Committee.

Will Funded Projects be Evaluated?

Yes. Funded projects will be evaluated to verify successful completion as defined in the grant proposal and compliance with any conditions made at the time of the grant. Excellent evaluations will enhance the credibility of the recipient organization and their subsequent grant requests. The reverse is also true. Failure to carry out successfully the objectives detailed in your grant proposal may harm your chances for additional funding.

What will the African American Community Fund Generally Not Fund?

While AACF remains flexible in trying to meet community needs, in general, grants are not made to fund:

- Routine operating expenses for established programs
- Conference attendance/training (unless presented as a necessary component of a larger program or objective)
- Development and fundraising-related expenses or events
- Annual appeals or membership contributions
- Travel for bands, sports teams, classes, and similar groups
- Computers (unless presented as a necessary component of larger program or objective)
- Endowments
- Individuals, directly
- Debt retirement and back taxes
- Post-event or after-the-fact situations
- Political activity

For more information on the African American Community Fund, visit www.cfsjc.org.

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