



# TRANSFORMING OUR COMMUNITY 2019 GRANT GUIDELINES

Through Erie’s remarkable civic organizations and generous donors, past and present, The Erie Community Foundation makes an incredible impact on our community. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for all in our region by evaluating and addressing community issues, building permanent charitable endowments and promoting philanthropic and community leadership. For details of the Foundation’s mission-aligned vision and strategy for priority grantmaking, please visit our website.

**In 2019, the Foundation invites nonprofits to apply for grants in the following categories:**

## HELPING TODAY GRANTS

These grants improve the quality of life for all in our region by ensuring a vital nonprofit sector. Thanks to unprecedented donor support, the Foundation has doubled its budget for this program in 2019. Typically, *Helping Today* grants do not exceed \$30,000, are limited to one year in duration and support the following:

- **Capital, Facilities or System’s Needs:** Assistance with financing equipment and/or machinery to improve agency or program performance, including structural improvements or repair;
- **Communication/Marketing:** Expand outreach capacity, improve organizational or program “branding” initiatives;
- **Technology:** Improve hardware, software, network resources and/or services necessary to manage the organization or program (bids are required, along with a 50% cash match);
- **Vehicle Purchase:** Bids are required, along with a 50% cash match relative to the purchase of any vehicle;
- **Program Expansion/Enhancement:** Increase or develop agency or program capacity and/or quality;
- **Public Policy:** Align civic affairs to advance nonprofit mission;
- **Advocacy:** Develop partnerships and constituency;
- **Planning:** Assessing new ventures, community impact, organization structure, etc.

## SHAPING TOMORROW GRANTS

*Shaping Tomorrow* grants support multi-year, collaborative projects that advance the Foundation’s strategic plan for transformative change. These grants will focus on reversing negative trends as identified by Erie Vital Signs key indicators. As part of our 5-year strategic framework, the Foundation will award up to \$15 million in Transformational Grants and \$10 million in Mission-Related Investments to projects addressing priority community issues, at scale.

This process differs from prior grant applications; we seek dialogue, collaborations and feedback from the community to prioritize issues. We want to partner with strong champions who can bring matching dollars to transformational projects. With no specific deadlines, projects will be considered after conversations with our Community Impact Team and upon submission of a required white paper. Applicants should expect significant dialogue, interaction with foundation trustees, and the development of a specific, multi-year proposal.

## COMMUNITY FUND DRIVES GRANTS

Local and regional nonprofit organizations may apply for support of their campaigns by submitting a Community Fund Drives grant request. Before applying for a grant from the Foundation, campaigns in excess of \$500,000 must be endorsed by The Community Fund Drives Committee, facilitated by The Nonprofit Partnership. For large campaigns, contact The Nonprofit Partnership at 814-240-2490. For campaigns below threshold of \$500,000, contact The Erie Community Foundation.

### HELPING TODAY DEADLINES

Application Deadline	Notification Date
January 10	March 8
May 9	July 5
July 25	September 20
October 18	December 17

## URGENT GRANTS

Sudden and unexpected events or situations arise from time to time that impede daily mission-critical delivery of services. When such situations arise that cannot wait until the next *Helping Today* grant cycle, please contact Rachel Cacchione, *Program Officer*, at 814-454-0843.

### APPLICATION FORM DISCLOSURE

**A PDF version of our applications are posted online, however all applications must be submitted through our online portal. A pre-application meeting with a member of our Community Impact Team is required before online submittal.**

## GRANTMAKING ELIGIBILITY

The Erie Community Foundation awards grants to nonprofit organizations defined as tax-exempt under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Eligible nonprofits must be located within Erie County or demonstrate service to a sizable population within Erie County. Eligible nonprofits may receive funding once per grant program in a 12-month period.

## FISCAL SPONSORSHIP

If an applicant does not have its own 501(c)3 tax exempt status from the IRS, it may apply for a grant using a 501(c)3 organization as its fiscal sponsor, provided the grant furthers the sponsor's own tax exempt purpose. The fiscal sponsor submits the grant and all evaluation reports to the Foundation, is legally responsible to ensure grant funds are used properly, maintains financial records pertaining to the grant, and retains complete discretion and control as to the use of funds. A fiscal sponsor agreement must be sent to the Foundation for review before any grant application is submitted.

## GENERAL GRANTMAKING INFORMATION

In general, grants are **not** made to:

- Individuals
- Scholarship Funds
- Fundraising Events
- Deficit Reduction
- Annual Operating Costs
- Endowment Campaigns
- Sectarian Religious Activities
- Reimbursements for Expenses Already Incurred

**The online grant application form must be completed by 5:00 p.m. on the deadline date. *Helping Today* applications are reviewed by Foundation staff and a volunteer grant advisory committee, with decisions made by The Erie Community Foundation's Board of Trustees.**

The Erie Community Foundation also manages grantmaking for donor designated, agency and scholarship endowments. Grants in these areas are made in accordance with the wishes of the original donor(s), consistent with Internal Revenue Service guidance.

## GRANTMAKING PROCESS

- Review the 2019 Grant Guidelines to confirm eligibility.
- Schedule a pre-application meeting with a member of the Foundation's Community Impact team.
- Log onto the Foundation's website, [www.ErieCommunityFoundation.org](http://www.ErieCommunityFoundation.org).
- Using the Grant Application access code received at the pre-application meeting, complete and submit the appropriate grant application, as directed by Foundation staff. A read-only *Helping Today* pdf application is accessible on the website without a code.
- Final funding decision made by the Foundation's Board of Trustees.
- If awarded funding, the organization will receive a grant agreement to be reviewed, signed and returned to the Foundation. A check will be released on the date indicated on the grant agreement.
- Regular evaluation reports are required of all nonprofits receiving a grant. Failure to submit reports **will** jeopardize future funding.

## QUESTIONS OR NEED INFORMATION?

Contact a member of the Community Impact Team at The Erie Community Foundation at 814-454-0843.

For more information, visit [www.ErieCommunityFoundation.org/Grants](http://www.ErieCommunityFoundation.org/Grants)