



# TRANSFORMING OUR COMMUNITY 2021 GRANT GUIDELINES

Through Erie’s remarkable civic organizations and generous donors, past and present, The Erie Community Foundation makes positive 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 priority grantmaking, please visit [www.ErieCommunityFoundation.org](http://www.ErieCommunityFoundation.org). **The Foundation invites nonprofits to apply for 2021 grants in these categories:**

## HELPING TODAY GRANTS

The Foundation’s *Helping Today* grants improve the quality of life for all in our region by ensuring a vital nonprofit sector. Thanks to unprecedented donor support, the Foundation doubled its budget for this program from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 a year. We have also created an endowment to sustain this level of grantmaking in perpetuity. *Helping Today* grants are generally capped at \$30,000 or less and limited to one year in duration. For the foreseeable future, *Helping Today* grant applications offering a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic will receive priority. Within this priority, grants may be awarded for:

- **Program Expansion/Enhancement:** Improve capacity through specific programs/projects delivering measured outcomes benefiting the community.
- **Planning, Public Policy Advocacy:** Advance a nonprofit’s mission through increased collaboration and organized attentiveness to civic priorities.
- **Communications/Marketing:** Expand outreach, develop a brand and directly connect with donors and volunteers as an organizational strategy.
- **Technology:** Upgrade technology that increases the nonprofit’s capacity to serve the community and meet its mission. Examples include: replacing hardware, software and network resources. Requires 50% match.
- **Capital, Facilities or System’s Needs:** Improve, repair or maintain a nonprofit’s facilities. Examples include: construction projects, equipment or systems for improved access or safety.
- **Vehicle Purchase:** Assist with purchasing a mission-critical vehicle. Requires 50% match.

| HELPING TODAY DEADLINES |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Application Deadline    | Notification Date |
| January 21              | March 19          |
| April 29                | July 2            |
| August 13               | October 8         |
| October 22              | December 16       |

## URGENT GRANTS

Periodically, sudden or unexpected situations arise that impede daily mission-critical delivery of services. When such events occur and cannot wait until the next grant cycle, please contact Rachel Cacchione, Program Officer at 814-454-0843.

## TRANSFORMING OUR COMMUNITY

The Foundation values the work of all nonprofits and supports a broad-based grantmaking program through our *Helping Today* grants and through administration of hundreds of donor advised and donor designated endowments.

Thanks to unprecedented donor support, and Foundation trustees with a desire to do more than maintain the status quo, a five-year plan was launched in 2019 to partner with a few strong anchor institutions to change the trajectory of our region.

This year, we continue to seek out strong partners, with strong brands, to develop multi-million dollar investments with the potential to impact Erie Vital Signs indicators. These grants will only be considered after extensive dialogue with foundation board and staff and we expect our grant dollars to be leveraged by several multiples.

The development of a specific, multi-year proposal, consistent with community goals, will be required.

There is no specific deadline and projects will be considered after conversations with our Community Impact Team and upon submission of a required white paper.

## COMMUNITY FUND DRIVES GRANTS

Nonprofits may apply for support of capital campaigns through a Community Fund Drives grant request. Before applying, campaigns in excess of \$500,000 must be endorsed by The Community Fund Drives Committee, facilitated by The Nonprofit Partnership (814-240-2490). For campaigns less than \$500,000, please contact The Erie Community Foundation (814-454-0843).

## COMMUNITY IMPACT SPONSORSHIPS

Toward highlighting Erie’s rich diversity and commitment to be a welcoming, inclusive community, the Foundation has modest budget for small sponsorships of community events that are free and open to the public and are intentional about advancing multicultural values. For more information see the grants pages of the foundation website or contact Rachel Cacchione, Program Officer at 814-454-0843.

## OTHER

**See information about Erie Community Foundation partners with funding opportunities:**

- Young Erie Philanthropists
- Erie Women’s Fund
- LGBT Community Endowment
- Hear Erie’s Youth!

## GRANTMAKING ELIGIBILITY

The Erie Community Foundation awards grants to nonprofits 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. Generally, eligible nonprofits may receive funding once per grant cycle 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, endowment campaigns, sectarian religious activities or reimbursements for expenses already incurred. The Erie Community Foundation also manages grantmaking for donor designated, agency and scholarship endowments. These grants are made in accordance with the wishes of the original donor(s), consistent with Internal Revenue Service guidance.

## GRANTMAKING PROCESS CHECKLIST

- Review the Foundation's 2021 Grant Guidelines to confirm eligibility.
- Schedule a pre-application meeting (email, telephone, or Zoom for now) with Community Impact team member.
- Log onto the Foundation's website, [www.ErieCommunityFoundation.org](http://www.ErieCommunityFoundation.org).
- Use the Grant Application access code received at the pre-application meeting to complete and submit the appropriate grant application. (A read-only PDF *Helping Today* application is accessible on the website without a code.)
- Meet the deadline.
- If awarded funding, review, sign and return a grant agreement to the Foundation.
- Provide regular evaluations. Failure to submit reports jeopardizes future funding.

### APPLICATION FORM DISCLOSURE

PDFs of grant applications are posted online; however, all applications must be submitted through the Foundation's online portal. A pre-application meeting with a Community Impact Team member is required before an online submittal. The online grant application form must be completed by the deadline date. *Helping Today* applications are reviewed by Foundation staff with the guidance of a volunteer Community Advisory Committee and final decisions by The Erie Community Foundation's Board of Trustees.

## OTHER RESOURCES:

- Visit [www.ErieGives.org](http://www.ErieGives.org) to learn how to register for the 11th Annual Erie Gives on August 10, 2021.
- Visit [www.YourNPP.org](http://www.YourNPP.org) to learn about the resources of the Nonprofit Partnership, which provides education, training and tools to strengthen nonprofits.

## QUESTIONS?

- 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).