

Virginia Community Foundation

Grant Policy & Application Process

The Virginia Community Foundation (VCF) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening and revitalizing our community. The earnings from the Foundation's permanent endowment are distributed through community enrichment grants. This endowment, being built with donations from hundreds of businesses and individuals, is meant to serve as a "community savings account" to keep Virginia a great place to grow up, live, work, and retire.

I. Eligible Applicants

In order to be considered for a grant from the Virginia Community Foundation, an organization and/or project must:

- Benefit the greater Virginia, Minnesota community (ISD 706 district boundaries), AND
- Be a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization or provide documentation that the organization is sponsored by a fiscal agent that has 501(c)(3) status, OR
- Be a public entity.

II. Funding Priorities & Exclusions

Through a community-based strategic planning process, the Virginia Community Foundation has set three priority goals for the 2019 – 2024 time period. Priority will be given to requests for initiatives that contribute to the accomplishment of these strategic goals:

GOAL 1 – Raise the community's awareness and stimulate action on important local issues and projects.

GOAL 2 – Increase efforts to revitalize and beautify the community.

GOAL 3 – Improve access to information that connects people with community activities and events.

In addition to the Foundation's main *Unrestricted Fund*, grants are awarded from the following *restricted* funds for projects that are targeted toward specific purposes:

Fund For the Arts – To support arts and culture in the greater Virginia, Minnesota area.

Parks, Lakes & Recreation - To promote recreational projects within the boundaries of the City of Virginia.

The Foundation also maintains certain funds designated to support the work of a specific charitable or public organization. Grants from such funds may only be requested by the designated organization.

Grant requests are evaluated on the degree to which they meet the following criteria:

- + Are likely to make a clear difference in the quality of life for a substantial number of people¹ in the service area over a significant period of time.
- + Propose effective approaches to address current community priorities, including approaches that are preventative in nature.
- + Show evidence of grassroots support and promote volunteer involvement.
- + Encourage cooperation and collaboration without duplication of services.
- + Leverage other funding.
- + Are efforts that require only **one-time support** or demonstrate a realistic plan for sustaining the effort after VCF funds have been expended.

The Virginia Community Foundation does NOT fund:

- Grants to individual persons or private foundations.
- Political organizations or campaigns.
- Religious purposes including worship, religious instruction, or proselytization.
- Endowments for other organizations.
- Fundraising campaigns or dinners, ticket sales, celebrations or similar activities.
- Traditional government services or dollar-for-dollar replacement of public funding.
- No retroactive grants will be given to events that have already occurred.

III. Application Process

Applicants need to complete the Virginia Community Foundations' Grant Application form², including the following information:

1. Name of the organization.
2. Contact person's name, title, mailing address, telephone number, and email address.
3. Background information about the organization including its mission/purpose and a brief history.
4. Purpose of the request and how it will positively impact the greater Virginia, Minnesota community including: a) level of need for the project and how that need was determined, b) goals the project will address, c) description of the target population and estimated number of people who will be served, d) specific activities proposed and a timeline for implementation.
5. Description of how the project includes community involvement.
6. Description of how the relative success of the project will be evaluated.

¹ *Defined as at least 10% of the targeted population.*

² *The application form is available in the Foundation office, or on our website at www.virginiafoundation.com.*

7. Itemized project budget detailing all projected expenditures based on third party estimates or other documentation, and dollar amount requested from the Virginia Community Foundation.
8. List of other funding sources with dollar amounts, including whether committed or pending.
9. Plan for sustainability after VCF funds have been expended.

Submit one (1) copy of your grant request to the Foundation office, along with one (1) copy of each of the following:

1. For nonprofit entities: Copy of IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter, or letter indicating fiscal agency relationship and a copy of that organization’s IRS determination letter; For public entities: Copy of IRS Governmental Information Letter.
2. A complete list of your organization’s board members or leaders.
3. A copy of your governing body’s resolution and minutes authorizing the grant request.

The Virginia Community Foundation seeks to ensure that the strongest possible applications are submitted. Applicants with questions or that need assistance in preparing the written request are encouraged to contact the Foundation’s Executive Director for help.

IV. Grant Cycle Deadlines

The Virginia Community Foundation Board reviews grant applications and makes funding decisions on a bi-monthly basis. The Foundation performs due diligence activities to ensure grants will be used for charitable purposes. Due diligence may include site visits, interviews, community advisory committee recommendations, requests for additional financial information, or other research.

Grant Application Deadlines	Funding Decisions Made
January 1	February Board Meeting
February 1	March Board Meeting
March 1	April Board Meeting
April 1	May Board Meeting
May 1	June Board Meeting
June 1	July Board Meeting
July 1	August Board Meeting
August 1	September Board Meeting
September 1	October Board Meeting
October 1	November Board Meeting
November 1	December Board Meeting
December 1	January Board Meeting

Foundation staff will notify each applicant of the decision made about their request within one week following the Foundation Board’s meeting.

V. Award Policies

Approved grants will expire one year from the date of approval. If your project or event requires contingency funding, grant must be applied for after all funding is approved for project. A Grant final report ³ must be submitted within thirty (30) days after the grant period end date. Consideration of future requests will be dependent on completion of final reports for any prior grants.

Grantees letters of support are required to provide public acknowledgement of a Foundation grant on project sites and/or in project communications. Grantees are also strongly encouraged to make purchases of materials and services from local businesses when utilizing VCF funds.

³ A Final Report form will be provided to grantees by the Foundation.