Capacity Building Grant Guidelines 2026

Our community is dependent on our local nonprofit organizations' vital services to create vibrant communities where all people can thrive. The Community Foundation of Johnson County supports these nonprofit organizations through training, convenings, resources, and grantmaking. Our annual competitive grantmaking is a small portion of the over $4 million we award each year.

Each year, the Community Foundation of Johnson County makes grant awards to local nonprofit organizations in one (or more) of the following categories: Arts, Culture, & Humanities, Education, Environment & Animals, Health, Human Services, and Public & Societal Benefit. The following are the guidelines for the Community Foundation of Johnson County's Capacity Building Grants, funded through the Community Impact Grantmaking Fund held at the Community Foundation. Please read these guidelines completely prior to applying for this grant cycle.

Capacity Building: As defined by the National Council of Nonprofits, "capacity building is an investment in the effectiveness and future sustainability of a nonprofit." The CFJC is focusing the 2026 Capacity Building Grants on infrastructure, marketing, and software/technology to support upgrades and updates that will make a long-term impact on the grantee organization and its ability to effectively and efficiently serve their mission.

Purpose: To support the operations, growth, and sustainability of local nonprofit organizations, especially new, grassroots, and BIPOC-led organizations, through infrastructure, marketing, and software/technology capacity building grants.

Request Amount: The maximum request amount will be $2,500. The Community Foundation intends to make grant awards to multiple organizations for operational and capacity building support. These requests will not be program specific, but rather serve a capacity or operational need for the organization.

Basic Eligibility Requirements (see Priority Areas for Funding section for more information on what the committee prefers to fund):
All applicants should fit the following criteria:
- 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations, churches, the ICCSD, and government entities
  - Those without a 501(c)3 status are encouraged to find a fiscal sponsor to apply
- Significantly serving Johnson County, Iowa
- Fit within one or more of the CFJC's priority areas for funding as listed in the section below

Priority Areas for Funding

Funding Area	Prefer to Fund	Ineligible
Infrastructure	- One-time office purchases with long-term impacts, (i.e. printer/copier, ADA updates, safety features) - Utilities System Upgrades (i.e. new HVAC system, air conditioner, etc.) - Energy Efficiency Updates	- Ongoing utility payments/bills - Event space rental
Marketing/Promotional Items	- Evergreen promotional items that can be used for a variety of purposes and events (i.e. logo banner, roll-up banner, office signage) - Investment in multi-channel marketing tools, email campaign builders, etc. (i.e. Mailchimp, Constant Contact, Hootsuite, etc.) - Website updates - Camera or video equipment	- Printing costs - Swag to be used for giveaways, sponsorship, or tabling - Paid advertising including Google Ads, Boosting Posts, etc. - Organization branded clothing for staff and board
Software/Technology	- New or upgraded computer(s) and related accessories (i.e. keyboards, mice, HDMI cords, video cameras, etc.) - Organization-wide software for program needs, financial management systems, client or donor databases (i.e. Client-Relationship Management Tools, Quickbooks) - Communications system upgrades (i.e. phone systems, voicemail systems, etc.)	Personal cell phones or laptops

Ineligible Requests

Our application-based granting programs are intended to meet the diverse needs of nonprofits and the people they serve. There are some activities we do not fund with these granting programs, due to our policies and funding priorities. The following areas or program types are not funded by application-based grant programs of the Community Foundation of Johnson County:

- Deficit funding or debt retirement
- Direct financial support to individuals
- Political or lobbying activities
- Projects that are not for a charitable purpose
- Projects or events that have already been completed
- Religious or sectarian activities that attempt to convert a person to a particular faith or perspective, or social service activities that require participation in such
- Organizations or activities which do not comply with our nondiscrimination and diversity policy.

Timeline

Nonprofit Info Session: January 13th, 12pm, Zoom
Grant Applications Open: January 26
Grant Applications Due: February 20
Decisions: Late April
Grant Report Due: December 31st, 2026

Reporting
Grantee organizations will be required to publish either (1) a public social media post, (2) a section in an organizational e-newsletter, OR (3) a direct mailing to organization constituents, promoting the grant award and its impact, naming the Community Foundation of Johnson County as a funding partner. A copy of the published material should be sent to ellie@cfjc.org or mailed to: Community Foundation of Johnson County, Attn: Ellie Moore, 501 12th Ave, Suite 102, Coralville, IA 52241 by December 31, 2026. Promotional materials relating to the grant project and outcomes should include "funding provided by the Community Foundation of Johnson County". Any organization that does not comply with the due diligence process will not be considered for additional grants until compliance is met.

How to Apply
Grant applications will be completed via our online grants management system. If your organization does not yet have a user login, please contact our staff team. More information on the grants management system can be found here. Applicants will be asked to submit contact and organizational details, broad demographic information of service area/clients, budget and funds expenditure details, and impact on organization details.

Contact
Questions regarding this grant cycle, additional grantmaking through the Community Foundation, or alignment of requests can be directed to Ellie Moore, VP of Community Impact & Outreach at Ellie@cfjc.org or (319) 337-0483.

FAQs
- How many applications can one organization submit?
    - Only one application will be allowed per organization.
- I have questions about the online grants management system, where can I find more information about that?
    - Online grants management system instructions, walkthroughs, and FAQs can be found here.
- If I apply for this grant, can I also apply for the Fall Community Impact Grants or 5224GOOD's grant?
    - Yes, organizations will be able to submit one application per grant cycle.
- Are Community Reviewers still making grant recommendations?
    - Yes – a small team of community members will be reviewing and evaluating grant applications to make recommendations for funding to the CFJC Board of Directors.