

THE KEARNEY AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
BUILDING FOR TOMORROW FUND  
GRANT PROGRAM & GUIDELINES  
For Unrestricted Funds

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*Revised 3-25-2026*

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The Grants Program of the Kearney Area Community Foundation (KACF) is a means by which not-for-profit charitable organizations may secure financial assistance for programs and/or projects which will enhance the quality of life for all residents of the Kearney area and surrounding communities. KACF is a 'community' foundation, in that we collect and administer charitable funds under Section 509(a)(1) of the IRS tax code.

We channel gifts from donors to a variety of nonprofit organizations. KACF serves the Kearney area in three major ways: 1) seeking and soliciting gifts and bequests from individuals, families, corporations, foundations, and other not-for-profit organizations, 2) managing assets for preservation of principal, optimum return, and perpetuity of the donors' intentions, and 3) distributing funds through grants.

The following guidelines and online application pertain to the requests from the **unrestricted assets** of KACF. Unrestricted assets are those assets that have not been designated for a specific purpose or beneficiary and over which the KACF Board of Directors has full discretion.

This information is to provide you - the grant seeker - with both a general description of our Grant Program and the answers to the most frequently asked questions concerning grant requests. It also explains, in brief, our policies, priorities, limitations, deadlines and other facts you will need to know about the way we work and the factors that influence our decisions.

We urge you to read all of the following information before preparing an application for a grant.

We can offer no prescription that will ensure your success in obtaining a grant. Ultimately, each proposal is evaluated on its potential value to the community at a particular time in history and on the imagination, resourcefulness and credibility of those submitting it.

We believe the information contained in this document will be of assistance.

The sources of our funds are the gifts and bequests from individuals, families, corporations, foundations and other not-for-profit organizations. These donors deserve your integrity and appreciation as you request, and possibly receive, funds for your project.

# **Deadline Dates for Grant Submission**

**February 15**  
**August 1**

## **How to Apply for a Building for Tomorrow (BFT) Grant**

1. **Review the Grant Program and Guidelines** to make sure you qualify to be considered for a grant.
2. **Complete an online Grant Application Form.** This form is available by visiting our website [www.kearneyfoundation.org](http://www.kearneyfoundation.org). *No grant proposals are considered without an online application.*
3. **All questions** on the online application need to be answered. Supporting documents are required (see list below).
4. **Applications must be submitted online on, or before, the dates listed above, not later than 11:59 pm.** This is a **firm deadline** -- please do not call for an extension.

If you would like to discuss a grant idea, verify if your proposal or organization qualifies, or have any questions at all, please call (308) 237-3114.

## **Supporting Documents Required**

- A. **Federal Tax Exemption letter** for your organization or your fiscal agent
- B. **Names and titles of leadership**, including directors, board officers and/or key volunteers for your organization and your fiscal agent (if applicable)
- C. **Operating budget** for the current year, including a list of principal sources of income
- D. **Financial statements** from most recent year-end, include audited statements if available
- E. **Grant budget for project or program** includes sources of funds for the project and amount of each (in-kind donations should also be listed) and expenses of this project. (We will provide a form for you to fill out and upload.)
- F. **Latest tax return** (Form 990) filed with the Internal Revenue Service by the applicant organization.

## **Eligibility**

Typically, a community foundation serves the people of a certain geographic area. This means that only projects or programs in the Kearney area and surrounding communities are considered for support. Grants are made to nonprofit, federally tax exempt 501(c)(3) qualified organizations or organizations delivering a project or program that qualifies as charitable activity or which has a fiscal relationship with a charity.

Single mission organizations or agencies (like the SAFE Center, HelpCare Clinic, etc.) may apply no more frequently than every 24 months after receiving a BFT grant from KACF. Multi-mission organizations or agencies (like Buffalo County Community Partners, Kearney Public Schools and the University of Nebraska – Kearney) may apply every year, but no more than two requests may be submitted in any one year by any sub-groups (goal work groups, departments, school buildings, etc). Once the sub-group has been awarded a grant, they will need to sit out for two years before reapplying. The committee will consider grant requests on a case-by-case basis.

## **Limitations**

As a general practice, the Kearney Area Community Foundation refrains from funding:

- Agencies serving a populace outside of KACF's service area; or to programs that do not meet the mission of the KACF.
- Annual fund drives, galas, or other special-event fundraising activities
- Debt reduction
- Dissertations or student/faculty research projects
- Established or new endowment funds
- Indirect/administrative costs, or operating expenses that are part of the typical cost of running the organization as it exists. These types of costs are necessary for the organization to function, such as salaries, rent, utilities, and office supplies
- Institutions that discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender, mental, emotional or physical ability/disability, national origin, or age in policy or in practice
- Loans, fellowships, or grants to individuals
- Religious activities (unless non-denominational and serving a broad segment of the population)
- Political lobbying, or legislative activities
- Private or parochial schools (unless serving a broad segment of the population), as well as other private organizations
- Profit making enterprises (unless allowed by Federal Treasury Regulations)
- Travel, tours or trips, including honor conferences, expanded studies
- Umbrella organizations that would re-distribute the requested funds at their discretion

## The KACF awards grants in eight fields of interest:

- Arts/Culture
- Community/Civic
- Economic Development
- Education
- Health
- Human Services
- Recreation
- Religion (non- denominational)

### Types of grant funding may include, but are not limited to:

- Capital projects such as construction, remodeling, additions to existing buildings, and purchases of major equipment.
- Challenge or matching grants which require financial commitments from other donors in order to promote leverage for generating additional funds.
- Seed grants to initiate promising new projects or programs, thus allowing them to demonstrate their usefulness to the community; and those which assist those populations who are not adequately served by existing community resources.
- Unusual or emergency funding for annual operating costs or major repairs.
- Operational funding for **new and/or expanded** programs and projects.

## Selection Criteria

The following are areas, in no particular order, the selection committee will consider when evaluating grant proposals:

1. The organization applying **must establish the need**, quality, effectiveness, etc., of its service, and the same of the project or program for which it seeks grant funding.
2. The organization applying **must exhibit a genuine commitment** toward the project or program rather than being primarily concerned with the perpetuation of the organization.
3. **Stability of the applicant** as evidenced by thorough and positive financial statements, solid plans for future funding, and other related factors.
4. The project or program is likely to make a **clear difference** in the quality of life for a **substantial number** of people, and where a moderate amount of money would produce a significant result.
5. **Innovation** through the project or program that represents an **efficient approach** to serving community needs and opportunities; and that propose practical approaches to solutions of current community programs.
6. **Longevity** as evidenced by plans for continuation beyond the initial funding period (for ongoing programs).
7. **Partnership, cooperation and collaboration** within the project or program so as to reduce duplication of services (or products) and strengthen the project or program's presence within the community and increase its likelihood of success; and to stimulate others to participate in the problem-solving.
8. **Involvement of the talents of those people who are expected to benefit**; and constructively address **diversity** and **positive change**.
9. **Volunteerism** enlisted in the project and involvement of citizens at large.

## FAQs

### **Q: Does KACF ever fund an entire project or program?**

A: In general, entire projects or programs are rarely funded. KACF looks for those groups or organizations which have individually raised a portion of the required funds and/or have enlisted the financial support of other organizations.

### **Q: What about ongoing programs?**

A: For ongoing programs, applicants must have a plan for future funding and support from other sources. Grants are usually awarded only for a definite period of time, normally for twelve months or less. It is important to show a need for the grant and how our modest grant would make an impact to an existing program.

### **Q: What else does that Grants Committee consider?**

A: At a minimum, an agency or organization must: 1) definitely establish the need, quality, effectiveness, etc., of its service and the same of the project or program for which it is seeking a grant, and 2) exhibit a genuine commitment toward the project or program rather than being primarily concerned with the perpetuation of the organization.

### **Q: Will the Grants Committee put restrictions on the grant?**

A: KACF reserves the right to place performance requirements (contingencies) on a grant award, such as requiring that the additional revenues needed to implement the project be secured prior to the grant being paid.

### **Q: How will the grant be awarded?**

A: KACF is required to do our due diligence by requiring documentation for a vendor to be paid directly or the nonprofit to be reimbursed.

## Monitoring & Evaluation

- Once notified of approval for a grant, the organization may request payment as needed, or as performance requirements are met within 12 months of receiving the grant notice.
- The grant recipient is responsible for arranging appropriate publicity regarding the receipt of the grant. Refer to the Funding/Partnership Recognition Suggestions document that is linked in your grant notification email and in the Grant Agreement online. You may also find this document linked at <https://www.kearneyfoundation.org/building-for-tomorrow>
- The grant recipient is required to report, in some detail, how the funds were expended. Any pictures and/or press clippings would be appreciated.
- KACF intends to periodically visit, request information, or monitor a project.
- **Misuse of grant funds will result in a recall of the funds and future grant support will be jeopardized.**

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