2027 Grant Guidelines

Important Dates:

GRANT APPLICATIONS OPEN	GRANT APPLICATIONS CLOSE	NOTIFICATION OF GRANT STATUS
Monday, January 11, 2027	Friday, March 12, 2027	Friday, May 14, 2027

Overview

The Leland J. and Dorothy H. Olson Charitable Foundation (The Olson Foundation) is a family foundation that seeks to transform the lives of people in Omaha, NE and Stanwood, WA and their surrounding communities by funding transformational, high-impact projects. Our mission is to develop relations with organizations that serve local needs in education, family, health and wellness, enrichment and environment. Our annual goal is to award several grants in various dollar amounts.

The Olson Foundation's funding cycle runs from January 1st to December 31st. The exact amount of funds available for awards in any given year will vary. The number of grants offered each year will vary.

Individual Olson Foundation Grant Committee members can not alter these guidelines. Any questions about the grant guidelines must be submitted in writing to grants@Olsonfoundation.org.

Eligibility

The Olson Foundation accepts grant applications from any organization recognized as tax-exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Organizations must be based in Omaha, NE and surrounding communities or Stanwood, WA and surrounding communities. The Stanwood surrounding areas served are Snohomish, Skagit and King County in order of focused importance. Interested organizations outside these counties must contact

The Olson Foundation and get board approval before being considered. Organizations that are a local chapter of a state or national charity serving residents of Omaha, NE and surrounding communities and Stanwood, WA and surrounding communities may apply. If an organization consists of several corporations, each individual corporation cannot apply for a grant. Established or new programs meeting the grant criteria are equally considered for funding.

Key Requirements

- Project must be implemented in and serve residents of Omaha, NE and surrounding communities or Stanwood, WA and surrounding communities.
- Grant recipients agree to provide interim progress reports and a final report to a designee of The Olson Foundation.
- Grant applicants select a Focus Area that describes their grant program/project.
- The organization and the proposed program/project is in line with The Olson Foundation's Focus Areas listed in the next section. We have also included a list of things that The Olson Foundation does not fund for your reference.

Focus Area

Non-profit organizations submit their applications under a specific focus area.

- **Education** Projects and initiatives essential to improving the educational process or improving access to education for children and/or adults.
- **Family** Projects and initiatives that strengthen and enhance the lives of children and families.
- **Health** Projects and initiatives that are essential to strengthening and enhancing segments of the community with significant economic, educational, social, and physical needs.
- **Environment** Programs and initiatives essential to protecting, promoting, and educating our community about the environment and its preservation. By conserving and celebrating the many facets of life, these programs promote positive change that encompasses and embraces all realms of life.

The Olson Foundation reserves the right to change the focus area designation of any application during the review process.

The Olson Foundation does not fund the following:

- Describing the use of funds as "general operating expenses" instead of providing specifics about the use of funds.
- General administration costs or overhead except for up to 15% of the proposed program/project
- Debt reduction or operational deficits
- Grants to specific individuals
- Endowment or memorial funding
- Interim or bridge funding
- Partisan, legislative, or political activities
- Fraternal, sectarian, and religious organizations where the grant is intended for the principal benefit of the organization's own members or adherents, or where the grant is intended for inherently religious activities
- Private foundations
- Legal expenses incurred in any action by or against the organization General construction or renovation (unrelated to a specific proposed project)
- Projects that discriminate against race, religion, creed, or sexual orientation.
- Fund drives or annual appeals
- General capital campaigns
- Advertising (unrelated to a specific proposed project)
- Pass Thru Organizations – organizations that raise funds and then distribute the funds to other non-profit organizations.

The Olson Foundation's guidelines are continuing to evolve. The Olson Foundation reserves the right to change grant award criteria without prior notice at any time.

Grant Application

Please read this page and the guidelines completely before starting the grant process to fully ensure you meet the requirements and to better the information we receive in the hope of awarding a grant from The Olson Foundation.

A Grant is a one year grant from **$10,000** to **$75,000**. All grant applicants will submit a grant application found on the Olson Foundation website - Olsonfoundation.org

See page 1 for exact dates for application submissions, due dates, and when organizations will be notified about their grant status.

The Grant Application has been updated which includes an online registration and application electronic submittal process. Please visit the Grant Application, online application in order to register, complete, and submit a grant application.

Matching Funds

Matching funds is another method to demonstrate collaboration. Matching funds are funds (cash or in-kind) your non-profit organization raises from other sources and the funds are used to support the grant project. The Olson Foundation will view a grant project that also generates matching funds as a stronger project than a grant project that does not generate matching funds.

If a grant project does not generate matching funds, it does not exclude your non-profit from submitting an application.

Collaboration

The Olson Foundation encourages non-profit organizations to collaborate with one another and with other individuals and entities in developing and providing transformational projects.

A collaborative relationship is one between two or more non-profit organizations that lowers costs and/or increases gains for those served by their programs. When two or more organizations collaborate, they align their missions and activities to achieve a common goal. A collaboration also meaningfully changes the way participating organizations do business for the long-term and requires Board involvement at a high-level, strategic activity.

If an organization's grant application is accepted, as part of the application process, the program description in the grant application must clearly explain the role of the collaborating organization(s). The program budget must indicate the collaborating organization's compensation. A signed certification and a letter of collaboration summarizing each collaborator's role are required from the collaborating organization. The lead partner in a collaborative project takes responsibility for completing the application and shepherding the application through The Olson Foundation's grant process. The lead agency's organizational, financial and IRS data will be examined as part of the application process. All grant funds will be payable to and administered by the lead partner. If the applicant is awarded a grant, the lead partner also manages the grant's project and ensures it is completed per The Olson Foundation's requirements.

It is also possible and acceptable that an additional organization(s) or individual(s) work on the project as a service provider or partner rather than a full collaborator. This relationship should be fully described and a letter of participation included in the application.

Being part of a collaborative effort does not exclude your non-profit organization from submitting another grant application for its own project.

Evaluation Criteria

The members of The Olson Foundation evaluate grant applications per the criteria listed below.

Is the project transformational?

Transformational projects solve a problem, satisfy a need or create an opportunity for strategic change. People involved in transformational projects look at the big picture to see a productive approach to change. This often means looking beyond the natural borders of their organization to find new ways to work with others to solve the problem, address needs, or capitalize on opportunities. The process for conceptualizing the transformational project includes several steps:

- Identify the wider need or the strategic issue to be addressed;
- Identify and explain change created by the project;
- Create project objectives;
- Describe the impact the project will create; and,
- Identify ways to measure the success of the project.

Does the project have high impact?

High impact projects significantly influence our community and can be achieved in a variety of ways, such as:

- Enabling an organization to affect a large group of people;
- Changing the way an organization addresses its mission resulting in a fundamental shift in how it provides services to its stakeholders;
- Creating new collaborations with other organizations to address a broader spectrum of the community; or,
- Directly affecting a small group of people which results in significant change that will have wider implications for the community.

Does the data and descriptions in the application fit with the project?

Local data describing the project's need or the population served is the best data. Providing national data on a particular need does not help us understand the local need your project is trying to solve.

Is the project sustainable?

The Olson Foundation grant funds must be expended in the timeframe requested in the Grant Application. In many circumstances your project won't resolve the issue, so, describe how you have affected the issue, including how the program will continue after The Olson Foundation funding has ended.

Does the non-profit organization submitting the application have the strength and capability to successfully administer the grant?

The project supports the organization's mission and strategic plan. The organization's Board of Directors and administrators provide effective operational and fiscal leadership. The members of the Board of Directors reflect a range of capabilities commensurate with the needs of the organization. The members of the Board of Directors support the work of the organization both behaviorally and financially. The organization is financially stable. The organization conducts effective annual fundraising. The staff positions indicated for the program are realistic. Additionally, is the amount of money requested reasonable for the project and the organization.

Additional Items Considered

The members of The Olson Foundation evaluate grant applications per the criteria listed below.

- How well does the organization's mission align with our mission
- Is the proposed project/program reasonable, needed, realistic, and well planned
- Does the project/program serve an underserved population
- How does funding this project/program compare to the other proposals
- Committee members may also review the organization's web site or call the organization.

Grant Review Process

The members of The Olson Foundation evaluate grant applications per the criteria listed below.

- The Grant Application is available on The Olson Foundation website and must be submitted online by the submission deadline. See page 1 for exact dates.
- The Olson Foundation leadership will conduct an initial review of the Grant Applications and contact applicants with questions or requests for information.
- The Olson Foundation Grant Committee evaluates each Grant Application using the criteria listed above. Applicants will notified by mid June on the status of their application.

Please visit the Grant Application, online application in order to register, complete, and submit a Grant Application.

Supporting Links

FAQ

Who We Are

What We Do

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