



HCCF Moonshot Grant Opportunity

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

General Questions

What types of projects are you looking to fund?

We are seeking bold, high-impact ideas that address significant community challenges and have the potential to create meaningful change in Hendricks County. The Foundation is open to a wide range of issue areas and approaches. Strong proposals will be grounded in community need, supported by data, and demonstrate a clear path from vision to impact.

What does HCCF mean by transformational?

Transformational projects create meaningful change that extends beyond incremental improvements. This may include addressing a significant community challenge in a new way, creating lasting community assets, changing systems or processes, building long-term capacity, or producing outcomes that would not likely occur without this investment.

Does a proposal need to align with HCCF's community needs assessment?

No. Applicants should demonstrate that their proposal addresses a clearly defined community need supported by credible and relevant data.

How will community-wide impact be evaluated?

Community-wide impact can take many forms, including broad reach, deep impact within a specific population, systems change, policy influence, capacity building, infrastructure improvements, or other lasting benefits.

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Is this a recurring grant opportunity?

No. This is a one-time grant opportunity made possible through the GIFT IX Community Support Grants Program from Lilly Endowment Inc.

Why is HCCF offering one large grant instead of many smaller grants?

The Moonshot Grant represents a unique opportunity to think differently. HCCF hopes to inspire transformational ideas and build a pipeline of bold community solutions that can attract future investment.

Is a financial contribution from the applicant required?

No. Matching funds are not required.

Will proposals that leverage additional funding or resources be more competitive?

Potentially. Leveraged funding and resources may strengthen a proposal but are not required.

Can in-kind contributions be included as leveraged resources?

Yes. Volunteer time, donated materials, facilities, professional services, and other resources may be included.

Can grant funds be used to expand an existing program, initiative, or facility?

Yes. Programmatic expansion and physical expansion projects are eligible if they demonstrate transformational impact and lasting community benefit. It is important to remind applicants that collaboration is key to this program. Therefore, expansion requests should emphasize how the program is already collaborative or how the request builds additional capacity for collaboration.

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Can grant funds be used to support a full-time employee?

Yes, if the position is necessary to implement the proposed project.

Is there a limit to how much of the budget can be allocated to personnel?

There is no set cap, but proposals with a substantial majority of funding dedicated to staffing should clearly justify those costs and explain the long-term plan to maintain the position(s).

Can AI be used to help prepare our application?

Yes. Applications should reflect the authentic voice of the organization and include verifiable, reliable information.

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Eligibility & Partnership Questions

Must the lead applicant be a 501(c)(3) organization?

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit is strongly preferred. Government entities are also eligible.

Can a 501(c)(6) organization apply?

501(c)(6) organizations are not eligible to serve as lead applicants. We encourage 501(c)(6) organizations to work with a fiscal sponsor or participate as partners.

Can for-profit businesses apply?

For-profit businesses are not eligible to serve as lead applicants but may participate as vendors, contractors, or partners.

Will a proposal be viewed more favorably if it includes for-profit partners?

No. Such partnerships are neither an advantage nor disadvantage and will be evaluated based on their contribution to the project.

Are partnerships required?

Meaningful collaboration is a core component of the Moonshot Grant Opportunity and will factor significantly into the review process.

How should multi-organization or coalition-led projects apply?

One organization must serve as the lead applicant and clearly describe partner roles and responsibilities.

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Must partner organizations be located in Hendricks County?

No. Outside organizations may participate if the project primarily benefits Hendricks County.

Does the project have to serve only Hendricks County residents?

No. Regional projects are eligible if Hendricks County receives a significant and primary benefit.

Can a regional or statewide organization serve as the lead applicant?

Yes, if the project primarily benefits Hendricks County.

Can a small organization realistically compete for this opportunity?

Yes. The strength of the idea and potential impact are paramount. Smaller organizations may strengthen capacity through partnerships, fiscal sponsors, or other supports.

What if we have a great idea but have never managed a grant of this size?

Applicants are not expected to have managed a \$1 million grant previously. Demonstrating the ability to build the capacity needed for success is more important.

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Letter of Intent (LOI) Questions

What level of project readiness is expected at the LOI stage?

Applicants are not expected to have every detail finalized. The LOI should clearly articulate the need, vision, approach, and key partnerships.

Can an organization participate in multiple LOIs?

An organization may only be the lead applicant on one LOI but may participate as a partner on unlimited LOIs.

How much detail is needed in the LOI budget?

Provide high-level major cost categories and estimates. Detailed budgets are not required at the LOI stage.

What distinguishes a strong Letter of Intent from an average one?

Strong LOIs address a significant need, present a compelling solution, demonstrate meaningful collaboration, and show transformational potential.

Can HCCF help connect organizations with similar ideas or potential partners?

Yes. HCCF may facilitate connections when opportunities for collaboration emerge.

How will HCCF protect the confidentiality of ideas submitted through the LOI and full application process?

Authorized reviewers follow HCCF's confidentiality policy. Application materials are generally not shared outside the review process.

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What if multiple organizations submit similar ideas?

HCCF may facilitate introductions or encourage collaboration if similar proposals arise in the LOI stage.

How will reviewers balance innovation and risk?

The strongest proposals balance ambition with feasibility. Thoughtful risk-taking is encouraged.

Full Application Questions

What happens if my LOI is selected to advance?

Approximately 4–6 organizations will be invited to submit a detailed full application, budget, implementation plan, supporting documentation, and possibly provide a presentation to the HCCF Grant Committee.

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Award & Post-Award Questions

What happens if my idea is not selected for funding?

Proposal details remain confidential, although HCCF may discuss broad themes or concepts publicly. HCCF may also facilitate connections among aligned organizations.

Can project budgets change after an award is made?

Yes. HCCF expects to work collaboratively with grantees to adjust budgets when reasonable and aligned with project goals.

What happens if a funded project needs to change during implementation?

Adaptation is expected. Significant departures from approved goals may require further discussion and review.

What are the reporting expectations for grant recipients?

Recipients will participate in quarterly progress conversations, provide semiannual financial updates, and complete a final reflection at the conclusion of the grant.

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Additional Questions? Let's Connect.

The Moonshot Grant Opportunity is designed to inspire bold thinking, encourage new partnerships, and strengthen our community's capacity to tackle big challenges. We recognize that transformational ideas often evolve through conversation, collaboration, and shared learning.

Whether you have a question about eligibility, want feedback on an idea, are looking for potential partners, or simply want to talk through a concept, we encourage you to reach out. HCCF is committed to serving as a resource, connector, and thought partner throughout this process.

Our goal is not only to fund a transformational project, but also to help cultivate the next generation of bold ideas for Hendricks County. We welcome opportunities to make connections, share insights, and support efforts that advance our community's future.

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