2026 GRANTS
GUIDELINES & FUNDS FOR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

POLK COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Introduction

Since 1975, the Polk County Community Foundation has been dedicated to advancing philanthropy and improving the quality of life for all citizens in the community centered in and around Polk County. Grants from the Foundation are completely funded by gifts and bequests from donors in our local community, in accordance with their charitable wishes. The Foundation offers a variety of grantmaking programs to support the important work of building community.

These guidelines are intended to give potential applicants introductory information about how to apply for competitive grants and the types of projects eligible for funding. For details regarding application deadlines and available funds this year, please refer to our Dates & Dollars sheet, available online and in the Foundation's office.

Which Organizations are Eligible for Grants?

- 501(c)(3) nonprofits, public school systems, and units of government that serve the citizens of the community centered in and around Polk County.
- Regional organizations that serve our community but are based outside of Polk County, NC or Landrum, SC should contact the Foundation for guidance about eligibility.
- Organizations new to the Foundation should contact us regarding grant eligibility as a first step. We have a committee review process to evaluate newly formed nonprofits or organizations that don't have a grantmaking history with the Foundation.

How to Apply

- Submit a Letter of Intent to confirm that your organization is eligible to apply for grants and that your project meets the criteria for one or more of our available grantmaking funds. Visit the Applications page of our website at polkccf.org/applications for details about how to complete a brief Letter of Intent form online.
- Contact Noah Wood, our Director of Grants, to discuss projects, proposals, or any questions related to our grantmaking process at grants@polkccf.org or call 828-859-5314 x 226.
- All grant applications must be submitted electronically using our online grants portal by the deadlines noted on our Dates & Dollars sheet. There is one online application to submit in order to be considered for all competitive grants available to organizations each cycle. For more details and a link to the online portal, visit the Applications page of our website.

Application Deadlines

Grant applications may be submitted on a quarterly basis in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Quarter cycles. The 4th Quarter is reserved for scholarships. For specific details, please refer to our Dates & Dollars sheet available online and in the Foundation's office. Applications must be submitted online by 5:00 pm on the dates indicated.

Available Grant Funds & Programs

The Foundation awards competitive grants from a variety of funds established by donors and grantmaking programs developed by our Board of Directors. Submitting the Foundation's general Grant Application allows our Grantmaking Committee and Board of Directors to consider awarding grants from a variety of funds.

- **UNRESTRICTED GRANTS**
  Unrestricted grants are awarded to fund a variety of projects of value to our community. Many organizations serving Polk County are eligible for grants to support clearly defined projects and programs that contribute to the community in a meaningful way.

- **DR. WILLIAM R. BOSIEN FUND GRANTS**
  The Bosien Fund was established in 1981 to honor the life and work of Dr. Bosien who gave twenty-five years of dedicated service to this area. The late Dr. Bosien moved to this area in 1954 with his wife, the late Dr. Marian Bosien. Throughout his career as a general surgeon at St. Luke's Hospital, he touched many people's lives, making his name an honored household word throughout Polk County and its environs. Dr. Bosien recognized the need for continuing medical education for the nurses and other medical support professionals at St. Luke's Hospital. He cared for patients regardless of income and regularly treated patients who were unable to pay. To honor his ideals, over seventy-five families and individuals contributed to this fund.

  Bosien grants are awarded to enhance the availability of medical care for patients unable to afford care and provide free medical education on topics of concern and interest to the public.

- **BRADLEY ENDOWMENT FUND GRANTS**
  Marjorie M. & Lawrence R. Bradley realized their charitable dreams by creating a grantmaking corporation. They left virtually their entire estate to the Board of the Polk County Community Foundation with instructions to create a permanent fund which would benefit Polk County by making grants in perpetuity.

  - **Bradley Community Benefit Grants** must fall within the parameters of the Bradley vision: *Bradley Community Benefit grants shall significantly improve the quality of life of Polk County residents for generations. The Bradley Board shall seek grantmaking opportunities which result in long-term impacts for our community as a whole and which may require a long-range view.*

  - Preference will be given to grants that support one of the following two areas of interest; however, the Bradley Board shall consider other grant proposals which are breakthrough proposals with "game-changing" potential for Polk County:

    1. **Direct Land Preservation and Conservation** grants are awarded to protect the natural assets of Polk County.
    2. **Community Gathering Spot** grants are awarded to acquire new space (new land or new buildings) in Polk County that provide a locale for neighborhood or county-wide conversations, meetings, classes, recreation, cultural experiences and events.

3. **Other Proposals**: The Bradley Board shall consider other grant proposals that are breakthrough proposals as opposed to incremental improvements which fit within the overall vision of the Bradley Breakthrough Community Benefit Grants and the specified criteria.
4. **Ineligible Proposals**: Grants are <u>not</u> awarded for projects outside the Bradley vision, events, maintenance expenses, operating expenses, programs, furnishings, fixtures, equipment, renovations or improvements of buildings, repairs or landscaping or other improvements to existing open space such as sidewalks, trails, swing sets, leveling, retaining walls, etc.

- **Bradley Planning and Studies Grants** are intended to fund breakthrough initiatives, projects, and learning that have "game-changing" potential for Polk County. Grants may be awarded for models, studies, seed money, plan development, conferences or other learning opportunities for staff and/or board members; all of which are intended to lead to a significant long-term benefit for our community as a whole. These grants should ultimately result in making Polk County an even more desirable place to live for generations. Grant proposals will be accepted in the areas of charitable, educational, medical and community benefits.

- **<u>CULBERSON AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FUND GRANTS</u>**
  The Culberson Fund was established in 1991 to recognize Paul Culberson for his outstanding contributions to all areas of our community. An initial anonymous gift by a member of our community started the fund and many donors have contributed to it over the years.

  Paul Culberson retired in 1977 as County Extension Chair, after 31 years with the extension service. Paul served our community in many ways over the years: he was the Executive Director of the Polk County Community Foundation for twenty years, a founder and director of the Foothills Equestrian and Nature Center, founder of the NC 4-H & Youth Foundation, President of Tryon Rotary Club, State President of the NC Agricultural Agents Association, Deacon and Trustee of the Congregational Church of Christ, and President of Tryon Country Club. The initial donor specified, "It is intended to serve as a perpetual tribute to Paul Culberson for the innumerable services that he has given to the community over the years."

  Culberson Grants are awarded for the advancement of agriculture in our community and related purposes.

- **<u>FREE COMMUNITY EVENT GRANTS</u>**
  This grant program is an initiative of the Foundation's Board of Directors to support face to face social interactions that build community in ways small and large. Gatherings funded by these grants are intended to benefit residents who have chosen to make this community their home, to give people an excuse to strike up a conversation and get to know each other.
  - Up to $3,000 may be awarded for small, single events and up to $8,000 for a series of events or a large single event likely to attract a hundred or more local people.
  - Attendees may not be asked for contributions and the events may not include the sale of food or merchandise, or charges for entertainment.
  - All publicity for the event shall be in local Polk County and Landrum media outlets and not designed to attract visitors from outside of our community.

- Grants are intended to help neighbors meet neighbors in a social setting, so tourism or economic development events, information fairs, or events that are primarily designed to promote your organization are not eligible for Free Community Event grants.

- **MARY F. KESSLER GRANTS**
  From her home on Mockingbird Hill, Mary Kessler enjoyed a unique view of Landrum and Tryon. Her connection to both communities is remembered through an endowment fund created at the Polk County Community Foundation.

  Kessler grants are awarded to support projects contributing to the physical and scenic improvement, development, or beautification of the towns of Landrum and Tryon, as well as the cultural, intellectual and educational development of its citizens.

- **KIRBY ENDOWMENT FUND GRANTS**
  Mr. and Mrs. Davis G. Kirby and Katherine Kirby established the Kirby Endowment Fund to provide edification and enjoyment to area residents of all ages and walks of life. Organizations may apply for three competitive Kirby grant programs administered by the Foundation, all of which must meet the Kirby definition of "free" noted below:

  - **Kirby Civic Events Fund** grants support enjoyable free civic events in the Tryon area.
  - **Kirby Harmon Field Youth Activities Fund** grants support free sports and recreational activities oriented toward the development of teamwork and good citizenship among the youth in the area.
  - **Kirby Rogers Park Innovative Events Fund** grants support entertaining, educational, and innovative free events at the Gibbs Amphitheater at Rogers Park.
  - **Note:** All Kirby events must be free, according to the following definition:
    1. Event attendees may not be asked for contributions.
    2. The event may not include the sale of food, or merchandise, or charges for entertainment.
    3. Gifts of merchandise and money as well as volunteers are most welcome to defray additional costs beyond those covered by the grant. However, the giver must remain anonymous, so that the event in no way becomes a marketing venture. *(Note: this means that Kirby events cannot recognize other sponsors.)*

- **LANDRUM COMMUNITY FUND GRANTS**
  The Landrum Community Fund was established in 2023 to celebrate the citizens of Landrum. These grants benefit Landrum organizations that are serving the residents of Landrum.

- **ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHENING & BOARD PLANNING GRANTS**
  Grants are awarded for educational opportunities to enhance an organization's operations and governance; train staff, officers and board members; develop models for future sustainability; and for other projects to improve an organization's capacity to work effectively and efficiently on its mission for the benefit of our community. Organizations are encouraged to apply! Up to $3,000 may be awarded for board retreats and up to $8,000 for other projects.

- **PUBLIC SAFETY ORGANIZATIONS GRANTS**
  Grants are awarded to enable public safety organizations to develop expertise in grantwriting. Grants may be requested for grantwriting conferences, subscriptions and other outlets which provide information regarding available grants. The Foundation shall consider all proposals which help the organization develop the knowledge or expertise necessary to receive non-local grants. Public safety organizations have this special grant program and are ineligible for other grants.

- **SALUDA COMMUNITY FUND GRANTS**
  The Saluda Community Fund celebrates Saluda! An anonymous donor established this competitive grant fund in 2006 to benefit Saluda organizations that are serving the residents of Saluda. The donor feels Saluda is "the most unique place on the planet; there is a sense in people of being where they belong."

- **STUDENT INTERN PROGRAM GRANTS**
  The Student Intern Program is an initiative of the Foundation's Board of Directors designed to support employment opportunities that benefit both local nonprofits and high school students in our community. Organizations receiving Student Intern Grants will be solely responsible for hiring and employing interns.
    - Hiring guidelines and other requirements are included in the required Student Intern Program Supplement and in the grant letter as additional conditions. Please note the residency and age requirements for hiring.
    - To be eligible for Student Intern Program grants, your organization must have existing paid staff. Please contact the Foundation if you have questions about this requirement.
    - Internships must be challenging, well-supervised, and provide interns with a meaningful role in planning and carrying out a special program or project of the organization.

Additional Grant Criteria & Foundation Policies

- Most grants must be spent within 12 months of the time of the award notification. You may request a longer grant period by indicating a later date by which grant funds will be spent on the cover page of the application.
- Applications for community events should be submitted in a cycle with decisions available at least 30 days in advance of when the event(s) will occur in order to provide sufficient planning time and opportunities to recognize the Foundation's support of your project.
- Prohibited grants:
    - Grants may not fund fundraising projects, events, or solicitations of any kind.
    - The Foundation prohibits funding of political parties, candidates, and lobbying efforts.
    - Grants may not fund expenses already incurred. In emergency situations requiring critical work to be completed before the completion of a grant cycle, organizations may be eligible to apply for "emergency reimbursement grants." Contact us for guidance.
    - Grants may not fund scholarships or monetary awards to be given by your organization.
- Please note that many policies and IRS requirements cover the distribution of grants from our various competitive grant funds. We suggest you contact our Director of Grants for assistance; however, please be aware that some policy decisions are made by a committee after a complete application has been accepted.

- Grant funds will not be paid to organizations with overdue Final Grant Reports for previously awarded grants. The Foundation considers Final Grant Reports when awarding new grants.

Helpful Publications

- The "Directory of Kirby Endowment Funds, Competitive Grant Funds and Donor Information" provides more information about the many funds available at the Community Foundation, including examples of past grants.
- Please refer to our "Dates and Dollars" chart, which will list application deadlines, notification dates, potential interview dates, and available dollars for each grant program.

Additional Application Hints and Requirements

- Our process involves intense review that requires detailed explanations so the Grantmaking Committee and our Board of Directors can fully understand what they are being asked to fund. This is especially important when it comes to preparing your detailed project budget.
- The Foundation may request the following additional items if relevant to your proposal:
    - Current Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation
    - Updated financials, including your most recent IRS Form 990

Questions?

For additional information regarding our grant application process, please contact Noah Wood, our Director of Grants. We recommend scheduling a meeting with Noah well in advance of the grant deadline so that we have a chance to work together to identify projects important to your organization that fit the Foundation's grant criteria. You may visit us at 255 South Trade Street, Tryon, NC or online at www.polkccf.org; call 828-859-5314; or email grants @polkccf.org.