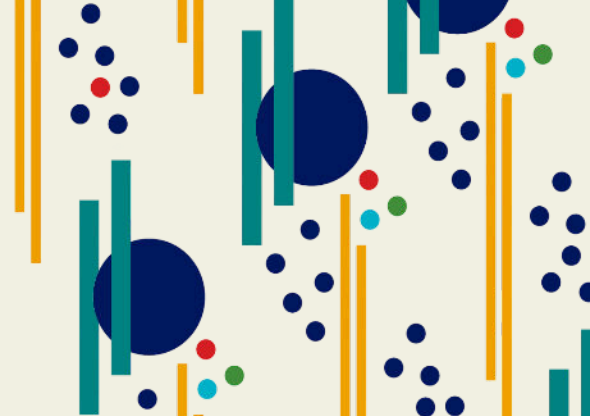


Rural Community Health Fund Grant Opportunity



2026 Community Impact Grant Guidelines

Rural communities face unique challenges, from limited mental health resources to workforce development gaps and health inequities—barriers that hinder long-term prosperity. Through strategic partnerships and targeted investments, the Greater Fayette Community Foundation (GFCF) is committed to bridging these gaps, empowering local organizations, and driving meaningful impact across the region.

The Rural Community Health Fund (RCHF) is designed to invest in the people and places of rural central Texas. The ultimate goal is to uplift vulnerable and marginalized rural communities, nurturing the capacity needed to create conditions where all residents can thrive and achieve wellness.

This fund is driven by a desire and commitment to collectively address the enduring impacts of trauma resulting from historic and systemic racism, poverty, and inequitable access to opportunities based on identity and location. It focuses on supporting those facing the greatest barriers to health and well-being.

Please note: The Fund focuses on nonprofit capacity building, community empowerment, belonging, and well-being. It cannot fund efforts to influence legislation, support political campaigns, or endorse candidates

Fund Goals

- Unleash the potential of rural communities in central Texas to make transformative changes that improve the health, wellness, and quality of life of people by supporting mission-driven organizations and networks of residents to improve policies, practices, and alignment of resources to address one or more of the social determinants of health.
- Build the capacity of people including formal and informal leaders within communities and organizations to collaborate and find solutions to pressing health and quality of life issues in their communities.



Fund Priorities

Health is more than medical care, it's shaped by where people live, work, and age. Social drivers of health (SDOH) are non-medical factors that impact health and longevity. GFCF's Rural Community Health Fund (RCHF) helps turn bold ideas for healthier rural communities into real impact. RCHF prioritizes five strategies to advance health equity and well-being, with grants available to support each one.

- **Engage and Empower Residents** – Grants to bring residents together to build relationships, learn new skills, and lead projects that improve health and wellbeing. Funds can support building social networks, learning project management, recruiting volunteers, working together on projects, and collecting stories of impact. Residents will be supported to take action on issues important to their neighborhoods and communities.
- **Build Community Leadership Capacity** – Grants to support emerging community leaders and help experienced leaders mentor new ones. Community leadership requires different skills and values than organizational leadership. Funding will support activities, workshops, training, and hands-on learning to strengthen leadership within the community.
- **Strategic Innovations for Rural Communities** – Grants to support identifying and testing new ideas, practices, or changes to how services and resources are delivered, aimed at improving community health and wellbeing. Funding is for new approaches, not existing programs, unless major changes are made to strengthen their impact. Innovations may include creating or introducing new ways to help residents improve their health and wellbeing.
- **Nonprofit Organizational Capacity Building or New Nonprofit Formation** – Grants to help rural or historically marginalized leaders build stronger organizations or start new 501(c)(3) nonprofits focused on health and wellness. Start-up funding can include first-year compensation for new leaders. Existing and new nonprofits can request funds for board development, strategic planning, financial literacy, fundraising, succession planning, program development, financial audits, or other organizational needs.
- **Participatory Grantmaking Funds for Resident-Led Networks** – Grants for resident-led networks to create a funding pool that activates and empowers residents through start-up funding for projects aimed at improving community health and wellbeing. Residents control how the funds are distributed. Note: Funds to secure technical assistance for implementing participatory grantmaking may also be requested.

Eligibility to Apply

The Rural Community Health Fund builds community capacity and supports innovations to improve health and wellbeing in Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, and Williamson counties.

Applicants must have a physical address in one of these counties (see blue shaded areas on the map) or provide programming, services, or support to residents there. Organizations must be 501(c)(3) tax-exempt and in good standing in their state



New or emerging groups, coalitions, resident-led networks, or collaborations without 501(c)(3) status may apply through a qualified fiscal sponsor that meets the foundation's eligibility criteria. Organizations engaged in community-driven work may also qualify through fiscal sponsorship. If you are unsure about your eligibility, **please contact Jamie Lee Manning** at jlanning@greaterfayette.com for guidance.

Eligible applicants include 501(c)(3) organizations in good standing, collaboratives with a 501(c)(3) lead organization, resident-led or grassroots initiatives with fiscal sponsorship if needed, and emerging efforts focused on creating positive community change.

Organizational Budget Threshold: Applicants with total annual operating budgets over \$500,000 are not eligible for Community Impact Grant funding.

- Exceptions: the following applicants may be eligible when applying for a clearly defined, community-serving project or program:
 - Public school districts / ISDs
 - Churches or faith-based organizations
 - Organizations applying on behalf of a specific program or site with an annual budget under \$500,000
- Additional Guidance: Some larger organizations operate smaller, community-based programs or sites. These may be eligible if:
 - The specific program or site budget is under \$500,000
 - The program or site clearly aligns with the purpose of the fund
 - Applicants will be asked to confirm this information during the eligibility check. Responses may determine whether an application moves forward.

Grant Terms & Award Amounts: Grants are awarded for 12-month terms, up to \$50,000 each, with a minimum award of \$10,000 based on the proposal review. Applicants may apply for multiple opportunities, but can receive only one grant per cycle.

Non-Discrimination: Applicants will be asked to read and agree to a non-discrimination policy to confirm that your organization or fiscal sponsor has a stated clause that includes race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, national origin, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and any other consideration made unlawful by applicable law, encompassing both employment practices and provision of services.

Grant Cycle Limits: Organizations may receive a Community Impact Grant for up to three consecutive years through the competitive grant process. After three years of funding, they must wait one year before reapplying.

Funding Restrictions: GFCF does not fund individuals, endowments, political activities, or efforts to influence legislation or support candidates. Programs that require adherence to specific religious beliefs are also ineligible; however, faith-based organizations serving the broader community may apply.



Application Process

Applications open from June 1 to June 30, 2026. Organizations can access the online application portal starting June 1, 2026, at 9:00 AM at <https://greaterfayette.com/community-impact/>. Applications are due by 5:00 PM on June 30, 2026. Grant terms are 12 months and will begin on October 12, 2026.

Fund Timetable: The Rural Community Health Fund follows one grant cycle per year, with set dates for applications, reviews, and grant agreements. Below are the key dates for the 2026–2027 cycle.

Date	Event
May 4, 2026	Guidelines Posted
May 5, 2026	Grant Informational Webinar
June 1–30, 2026	Application Open Window
June 2, 3 & 4, 2026	In-Person Information Workshops
August 21, 2026	Grantee Notifications
October 5, 2026	Community Impact Grantee Celebration
October 12, 2026	Grant Term Begins

Learning & Reporting

GFCF values partnership over compliance and encourages open dialogue about the impact of funded initiatives. Within 12 months of funding, grantees are asked to engage in a flexible learning and reporting process—this may include a conversation, site visit, or brief written update—tailored to the organization’s capacity. These reflections help us learn together and strengthen future collaboration.



Additional Support & Resources

Foundation staff are available to answer questions regarding strategic priorities, grant opportunities, and the application process.

- **Application Guide:** See the attachment Application Addendum for an overview of required questions and guidelines to complete your application.
- **Office Hours:** Schedule an appointment with the Senior Director of Community Impact to discuss your proposal. Office hours will be posted on social media in early May 2026.
- **Workshops:** Five in-person sessions and one webinar to provide applicant guidance.
 - June 2, 2026 | Fayette County
 - Fayette Public Library: 855 S Jefferson St, La Grange, TX 78945
 - 10:00 - 11:30 AM
 - June 2 2026 | Hays County
 - 5:00 - 6:30 PM
 - Abundant Life Christian Church: 251 Uhland Road, Suite 120, San Marcos, Texas
 - June 3, 2026 | Williamson County
 - 10:00 - 11:30 AM
 - Carver Center in Georgetown: 1200 W 17th St, Georgetown, TX 78626
 - June 3, 2026 | Bastrop County
 - 5:00 - 6:30 PM
 - Elgin Council Chambers/Civic Center: 404 N Main Street Elgin, TX 78621
 - June 4, 2026 | Caldwell County
 - 10:00-11:30 AM
 - Resurrection Life Church: 3460 County Line Road, P.O 54, Dale, Texas 78616
- **GFCF Website:** <https://greaterfayette.com/rchf/>
- **Contact Information:**
 - Jamie Lee Manning, Senior Director of Community Impact: jlmanning@greaterfayette.com
 - Ashleigh Parks, Senior Director of Community Engagement: ashleigh@greaterfayette.com
 - Susannah Mikulin, CEO: susannah@greaterfayette.com

About the Greater Fayette Community Foundation

Founded in 2001, the Greater Fayette Community Foundation (GFCF) has served as a vital bridge connecting donors, nonprofits, and community leaders to address the evolving needs of rural South Central Texas.

For over two decades, GFCF has championed a community-led, community-driven approach, awarding more than \$2.3 million in grants and scholarships to expand access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunity.

Building on this legacy, the Foundation is deepening its commitment to grassroots leadership—partnering with organizations, local leaders, and donors to tackle challenges and improve quality of life across the region.