



THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
of Muncie & Delaware County, Inc.
Where neighbors create legacies

LAND CONSERVATION FUND GUIDELINES
REVISED DECEMBER 2020

PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Land Conservation Fund grant program was created to meet the mission of The Community Foundation to exercise leadership in directing resources to enhance the quality of life for residents of Muncie and Delaware County, Indiana.

Grants from this program are restricted to assist non-profit organizations in Delaware County in either *purchasing of land for conservation/preservation of **natural areas** (Conservation Track) and/or the development of active **recreational areas** through a conservation/preservation lens (Recreation Track)*. The lands supported through this grant program must be accessible to the general public and located in Delaware County or owned by a nonprofit organization based in Delaware County.

- **Natural areas** are broadly defined as land composed of a wide range of natural communities that supports a rich diversity of animal and plant species typically threatened by urbanization or agricultural expansion. Human use is limited to the experience of the natural communities of the land.
- **Recreational areas** through a conservation/preservation lens are broadly defined as land designed, constructed, designated, or used for public outdoor human recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, walking, jogging, biking, etc. For more information about eligible activities, contact the Program Officer.
- All lands supported by the Land Conservation Fund grant program must be open to the general public. Natural areas and agricultural land must be perpetually protected with a conservation easement.
- The use of a consultant may be available for organizations pursuing funding from the Land Conservation Fund. Interested organizations should contact the Program Officer.

The Foundation operates without discrimination as to age, race, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or that perceived as a disability in the consideration of grant requests. Likewise, the Foundation does not knowingly support programs that negatively discriminate based on the aforementioned factors.

The Foundation does not make grants to individuals, for religious purposes, for political activities, for reduction of debt or excessive budget deficits, for travel expenses, for fundraising specific events or projects, for contributions to endowments or for specific program or project expenses that are already covered by planned tax distributions received by a government agency for current year state approved budgets. The Foundation does not typically award to statewide (IN), out of state or national organizations unless the monies are to be used solely to benefit citizens of Delaware County, Indiana. The Foundation does not award grants that provide direct benefit to a donor or donor's family.

GUIDELINES

The Community Foundation accepts applications quarterly which are reviewed by a volunteer advisory committee that make recommendations to the Board of Directors for final approval.

Grants are awarded from the Land Conservation Fund of The Community Foundation. Grants are generally awarded to 501c3 organizations and may also be awarded to units of government or schools.

Requests are awarded in a range of amounts. Grant funds may be used for the cost of land acquisition and/or project soft costs (ie, closing costs, appraisals, etc.), for the demolition of deteriorating, unsafe structures, or the construction of a public access point such as a parking lot to enhance the safe public use of the land. Additionally, funds may support equipment or structures integral to a recreational area.

Grant funds cannot be used for stewardship or staff. Grant funds cannot be used for the purchase of sporting or recreational equipment or structures such as standard playground equipment, goal posts, bases, courts, etc. In most cases, funds cannot be used for the removal or remediation of hazardous substances. If a suspected hazard has been remediated, the applicant must show remediation to Indiana Department of Environmental Management recreation standards/limits or provide a letter of comfort with the application if a hazard is or was present at the time of acquisition.

PROCEDURES

- The Land Conservation Fund Advisory Committee and the Board of Directors review applications on a quarterly basis.
- Submission deadlines are March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1.
- All applications are submitted in the online grants system at: <http://bit.ly/2qY1Ofv> *Link to application questions.*
- All applicants are encouraged to contact the Program Officer prior to submission with questions about the grant program and how best to craft their application.
- Foundation staff, on behalf of the Land Conservation Fund Advisory Committee, may conduct application research. Organizations should expect contact through email, phone or in-person in the time between application submission and notification. It is of vital importance to provide answers to questions and access to sites if a visit is requested.
- Notification occurs approximately 6-8 weeks after full application deadlines.
- Organizations awarded a grant are required to sign a grant agreement form electronically to accept the conditions of the grant.
- Organizations awarded a grant are required to sign a request for distribution form electronically to receive payment.
- Organizations awarded a grant are required to submit a post grant report.

RULES

- First-time applicants are required to contact the Program Officer to discuss grant applications prior to submission or the application may not be accepted or reviewed by the Land Conservation Fund Advisory Committee. All other applicants are highly encouraged to contact the Program Officer.
- In instances of land acquisition, applications should include a written commitment to sell from the landowner. Applicants are required to establish a reasonable estimate of the purchase price. An appraisal is not required at the time of application, but it is often helpful. If an application is approved, the purchase price must be based on an appraisal by a Certified General or Certified Residential Appraiser.
- The Foundation performs due diligence for every applicant. If an organization is found to be in revoked 501(c)(3) status with the IRS at any time during the application process, the application will not be accepted or reviewed by the Land Conservation Fund Advisory Committee. The organization will be permitted to apply if the IRS letter of reinstatement is provided to the Foundation. Only the official letter from the IRS can be accepted.
- The Foundation reserves the right to reject an application due to outstanding open grants or open post grant reports.