

# COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF MOUNT VERNON/KNOX COUNTY GUIDELINES FOR GRANTMAKING

*(Adopted 11/13/2002)*

## INTRODUCTION

For more than a half-century the Community Foundation of Mount Vernon/Knox County, known formerly as the Mount Vernon/Knox County Community Trust, has awarded grants and scholarships from a variety of unrestricted, donor-advised and designated funds. As a group, these awards reflect the diversity of charitable interests defined in the Foundation's mission statement:

- *To improve the quality of life in Mount Vernon and Knox County through charitable giving;*
- *To provide a vehicle for donors of varied interests to support charitable and community activities;*
- *To assess and respond to emerging and changing community needs in the fields of education, youth services, recreation, arts and culture, social services, and civic and community development; and*
- *To develop a permanent endowment for the community, and to serve as a catalyst for the initiation of vital projects.*

The trustees of the Community Foundation of Mount Vernon and Knox County are committed to identifying and initiating projects that fulfill this mission, and invite funding proposals from Knox County organizations that share their vision. Grant-seekers typically apply to the Foundation for financial support from its unrestricted funds, which are distributed based on availability, and upon a proposal's merits, as measured against the following criteria: **Eligibility, Foundation Priorities and Coordination of Funding.** Each of these criteria is discussed in detail below.

## **Types of Foundation Grants**

All requests for funding must receive majority approval at a Foundation board meeting in which a quorum is present. All grant applications are considered by the Foundation board at regularly scheduled meetings in the months of February, April, June, August, October and December. Applicants should be aware grants are awarded on a competitive basis, and that deadlines for submission of requests must be strictly observed.

To expedite the consideration of **Small Grant** requests, and to provide adequate time for the review of **Major Grant** requests, two distinct applications procedures have been established by the Foundation:

A **Small Grant** application (up to \$3,000) should be received by the Foundation *before the first day of the month* in which it is to be considered (*See chart below*). The Small Grant application consists of a two-page form, to which one or two pages of supporting documentation may be appended (*See “How to Apply” below*).

A **Major Grant** application (more than \$3,000) should be received *by the first day of the month prior to the month* in which it is to be considered (*See chart below*). The application for a Major Grant consists of a one-page form, and various required exhibits (*See “How to Apply” below*). The Foundation advises organizations applying for funding of \$25,000 or more to do so as early as possible in the calendar year, preferably by January 1, for consideration at the February board meeting.

Applicants of both Small Grants and Major Grants will be informed of the Foundation’s decision by the final day of the month in which a grant is considered (*See chart below*).

**Community Foundation of Mount Vernon & Knox County  
Schedule of Grant Application Deadlines and Notification Dates**

<b>Small Grant Application Deadlines</b>	<b>Major Grant Application Deadlines</b>	<b>Reviewed by Community Foundation in</b>	<b>Notification of Foundation Decision by</b>
<b>January 31</b>	<b>January 1</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>February 28</b>
<b>March 31</b>	<b>March 1</b>	<b>April</b>	<b>April 30</b>
<b>May 31</b>	<b>May 1</b>	<b>June</b>	<b>June 30</b>
<b>July 31</b>	<b>July 1</b>	<b>August</b>	<b>August 31</b>
<b>September 30</b>	<b>September 1</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>October 31</b>
<b>November 30</b>	<b>November 1</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>December 31</b>

**CRITERIA**

**Eligibility.** Most grants are made to tax-exempt, private agencies classified as 501 (c) (3) organizations, and to public charities as defined by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. Public schools, governmental entities and Knox County colleges and universities are also eligible to apply for Foundation grants. Prospective applicants are urged to contact the Foundation before preparing an application if there is a question concerning eligibility.

Certain projects and organizations are **not eligible for funding**, including but not limited to:

- Grants to individuals
- Endowment campaigns
- Ongoing operating expenses

- Religious organizations (for religious purposes)
- Purchase of computers or other equipment (that is not part of a broader project)
- Existing obligations, debts or liabilities.
- Police and fire protection
- Staff positions for government agencies
- Travel (when it is the proposal's primary focus)
- Organizations that do not operate programs in Knox County, or for the benefit of Knox County residents
- Political campaigns.

**Foundation Priorities.** The Foundation seeks to maximize its impact in the community and has adopted the following strategic priorities to guide its grant-making. Proposals that address one or more of these priorities have a greater likelihood of success. They are listed here in no particular order of importance.

- A pilot project which can serve as a model of excellence in the community
- A project which proposes a creative solution to an identified, but unmet need, in the community
  - A project or program which encourages volunteer involvement
  - A project that is a collaborative effort among nonprofit organizations in the community and will eliminate duplication of services
  - A project which is likely to make a clear difference in the quality of life for a substantial number of people
  - A project which promotes economic vitality in the community.

**Coordination of Funding.** The Foundation prefers to support projects in which it is a funding partner, rather than the sole funding source. Applicants are strongly urged to include some degree of match funding in their proposal, and in most cases Foundation grants should be the final dollars committed to a project. An additional factor in considering an award is an organization's demonstrated ability to sustain the project, if applicable, when Foundation funding has ended.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- While the Foundation's board of trustees does not establish specific distribution quotas, either by geography, project type, or any other criterion, it makes every attempt possible to fund a broad spectrum of needs throughout Knox County.

- Incomplete grant proposals are not eligible for consideration, and will be returned to applicants. The Foundation may on occasion request an applicant to submit an addendum, addressing specific questions, prior to its making a final determination.

- An applicant for a grant of \$25,000 or more may be invited to personally present the proposal to members of the distribution committee and/or the entire board of trustees. Presentations are usually limited to 15 minutes, including time reserved for questions from Foundation members.

- The Foundation board of trustees does not issue statements of explanation for applications it is unable to fund. Unsuccessful applicants, who plan to submit a similar request for funds at a later date, are urged to discuss the Foundation's application requirements and funding priorities with the executive director prior to re-submission.

- Contributions and bequests to the Foundation are often the result of publicity concerning a funded project. Therefore, the Foundation requires all grantees to appropriately acknowledge its financial support in news releases, internal publications, announcements, and, where appropriate, on building plaques, equipment and other capital items.

- The Foundation has both a fiduciary and a community responsibility to prudently manage resources that have been entrusted to it. Grantees share in this responsibility and are required to submit the *Project Completion Certification* provided by the Foundation, as well as annual progress reports for multi-year projects.

- Unutilized grant funds may not be used for unbudgeted purposes, and must be returned to the Foundation for re-distribution.

## HOW TO APPLY

An application form for either a Small Grant or a Major Grant may be obtained in person or by mail from the Community Foundation of Mount Vernon & Knox County office, located on the first floor of the First-Knox National Bank Main Office, One South Main Street, P.O. Box 1270, Mount Vernon, OH 43050. Applications may also be requested by telephone: 740-392-3270; by fax: 740-399-5296; or by e-mail: [thefoundation@firstknox.com](mailto:thefoundation@firstknox.com). **At this time the Foundation accepts only hardcopy grant applications**, however, the application form itself is available in *Microsoft Word* format (Windows and Macintosh compatible), and upon request will be provided by return e-mail. Applications received after the published deadlines will be considered at the next scheduled meeting.

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