

# **SKOKIE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION • 2026 GRANT CYCLE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

## **1. Philosophy**

Skokie Community Foundation (SCF) invites proposals in which organizations collaborate for the benefit of Skokie residents. SCF seeks to invest in organizations and projects that are poised to make a difference in the lives of Skokie residents and strengthen the community beyond the grant period. These proposals should also be scalable and sustainable.

## **2. Type of Grant**

- i. Program: Applications may be based upon new initiatives, pilot projects, or continuing improvements to projects that have shown long-term, positive impact.
- ii. Funding: SCF typically funds grants in the amount of \$5,000, and it has funded compelling proposals with smaller budgets. Proposals may request up to \$10,000.
- iii. Areas of funding: Preference will be given to proposals that directly address how the project will benefit Skokie residents in areas of clearly identified needs. SCF fosters a supportive, engaged and dynamic community in Skokie through meaningful giving, collaboration and community programming.

**SCF places particular priority on proposals that:**

- **Bring about unity in diversity and emphasize the importance of breaking down barriers, building relationships, and working toward a shared vision of unity and mutual respect and understanding in the Skokie community.**

## **3. Qualifications**

- i. Each proposal must be submitted by at least two organizations working together to benefit Skokie residents. Each application must include a joint written statement (which can be brief) detailing that each organization jointly supports the project, and detailing their respective responsibilities and how they will support the proposed project.
- ii. One of the co-applicants must be a 501(c)(3) organization, a school, or a government entity, or must have a fiscal sponsor that qualifies as a tax-exempt organization under Sec. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- iii. All proposals must address issues, concerns and/or opportunities for Skokie and its residents. Proposals must primarily benefit Skokie residents and the majority of those benefiting must be Skokie residents.
- iv. Applicants need not be based in Skokie.

#### 4. Evaluation Criteria

SCF will evaluate proposals according to the following criteria:

- i. Does the proposal address a significant concern, need or opportunity in Skokie? Can it be scaled?
- ii. Does the proposal clearly show how the grant will be used to foster collaboration between organizations to make a positive change in Skokie that would not otherwise occur?
- iii. Does the proposal address the role to be played by each co-applicant, the qualifications of each co-applicant, and the division of responsibilities between each co-applicant?
- iv. If applicable, does the proposal address the recruitment of participants from Skokie?
- v. Is the project budget appropriate to the goals, objective, and expected outcomes?
- vi. Is the evaluation plan sufficient to track progress and determine success?
- vii. How important is the funding to the project? Would the project move forward without it?

#### 5. Funding Parameters

- i. **SCF will not provide grants for:** general operating support, rent, capital equipment, endowments, fund-raising events or sponsorship of events, scholarships, appeals for religious purposes (though faith-based organizations may apply for projects benefiting the general community) or grants to individuals.
- ii. Preference will be given to ongoing projects rather than one-time, stand-alone events.
- iii. Preference will be given to projects that are sustainable.
- iv. Previous applicants and grantees may and are encouraged to apply.
- v. Proposals may request up to \$10,000. SCF intends to award a total of \$25,000 in this grant cycle but reserves the right to diminish or expand the total amount of awards.
- vi. Grants may be awarded for partial or full funding of proposal requests.
- vii. Grants will be made for one year for the period of January 1 through December 31, 2026.

viii. The contact person for each proposal will be notified of the grant award decisions by early October 2025.

ix. Grantees shall submit a one-page mid-year report by July 1, 2026. The mid-year report should include testimonials and applicable pictures and/or videos showing how the grant funds are being applied.

x. SCF reserves the right to conduct a site visit with Grantees at an agreed-upon date.

xi. Grantees will submit a one-page final report due by January 31, 2027. The report should include testimonials and applicable pictures showing how the grant funds are being applied.

## 6. Submission Process

i. Proposals must have: 1) a Project Narrative as described in Section 8 below; and 2) Additional Required Information, detailed in Section 9 below. Proposals may also include Optional Materials as described below in Section 10.

ii. Proposals must be submitted electronically as one pdf at the SCF's website: <https://skokiecommunityfoundation.org/rfp/>

iii. The submission deadline is **Tuesday, July 15, 2025, 11:59 pm CST**, via the SCF website at: <https://skokiecommunityfoundation.org/rfp/>.

## 7. Project Proposal Length

The project narrative part of the proposal (not including Attachments 1 and 2) *must* comply with the following length limitation: no more than six double-spaced, single-sided pages using 12-point font. SCF reserves the right not to consider noncompliant proposals.

## 8. Project Narrative

The project narrative of the proposal must address each of the following points numbered and titled using the following eleven headings. **Descriptive narratives not divided into the following headings will not be considered. This must be combined into one pdf file along with the required materials below.**

i. *Focus*: What challenge or opportunity do you seek to address?

ii. *Organizations*: Identify each partner organization. For each partner, state its mission and total annual operating budget (described in one number, e.g., "a \$5,000,000 annual operating budget.")

iii. *Project*: Describe the program or project you propose.

iv. *Methods*: Describe your methodology.

v. *Goals*: What are the specific goals of the project? How will the grant make a positive change in Skokie that would not otherwise occur? What is the projected timetable for implementation?

vi. *Audience*: Who will be served by your program? How many participants/what percentage will be Skokie residents? How will you reach your intended audience and/or recruit participants?

vii. *Evaluation*: Describe the expected measurable program outcomes and program evaluation methods. How will you know if the project is successful? What measures of progress would you expect to see by the midpoint of the grant **(June 2026)**?

viii. *Organization contributions*: What is the scope of work for each organization that is applying? Will this grant be used to foster new collaboration between organizations or have they worked together before? If so, on what projects?

ix. *Qualifications*: What resources, experience, and/or expertise does each organization bring to the challenge your project seeks to address?

x. *Sustainability*: Will this project be sustainable after the grant period ends? What is the continuation plan? Will additional funding be needed for this project, during or after the grant period?

xi. *Scalable*: How can this solution be expanded to more organizations or to serve a larger population?

## **9. Additional Required Information**

All Applicants must also include the following information in their proposal. This information must be combined into one pdf file along with the Project Narrative.

i. The name, title, phone number, email and mailing address of one individual who will serve as the contact person for each submitted proposal.

ii. A project budget including total cost of project, other sources of funding received to-date, and funding being requested in this Request for Proposals.

iii. All Applicants must submit a joint statement from each participating organization, described above in Section 3, subsection i.

## **10. Optional Materials**

Applicants may also submit collateral materials that will provide a helpful context for the review of the proposal. Please limit the Optional Materials to the equivalent of five

pages. These must also be combined into one pdf document with the required information above.

### **11. Each submitted proposal must have:**

The Project Narrative, all Additional Required Information as outlined in Section 9, and any Optional Materials as outlined in Section 10 combined into one pdf document.

### **12. Confidentiality**

- i. Unfunded applications will not be made public.
- ii. Program plans of accepted applications will be made public through news releases, on the SCF website and through other outreach.
- iii. Total operating budget of the applicant organizations, whether funded or not, will not be made public.

### **13. Nondiscrimination**

SCF does not discriminate against any grant applicant based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious creed, national origin, physical or mental disability, protected veteran status or any other characteristic protected by law.

### **14. Submission Deadline**

- i. The Request for Proposals applications will be posted on the SCF website on May 1, 2025 at <https://skokiecommunityfoundation.org/rfp/>
- ii. Proposals must be submitted by **Tuesday, July 15, 2025, 11:59 pm CST**, via the SCF website at: <https://skokiecommunityfoundation.org/rfp/>
- iii. NOTE: Proposals will only be considered by SCF in the event that the electronic submission is received on or before the deadline.

### **15. Grants Calendar**

- i. Grant Notification: no later than early October 2025
- ii. Interim Progress Reports Due: July 1, 2026
- iii. Site Visits with Grantees: As agreed upon by Skokie Community Foundation and Grantees
- iv. Final Report Due: January 31, 2027

## **16. Questions?**

Any questions regarding this Request for Proposals should be sent by email to:  
Jim Szczepaniak, Executive Director, Skokie Community Foundation at  
[jims@skokiecommunityfoundation.org](mailto:jims@skokiecommunityfoundation.org).

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**ATTACHMENT 1: Program/Project Budget**

**Proposal Title:**

**Primary Contact Information**

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Email:**

**Mailing Address:**

**Program/Project Budget**

REVENUE	Received or Awarded	Pending*	Narrative
Grants:			
Grant A	\$	\$	
Grant B	\$	\$	
Individuals:	\$	\$	
Fees for services:	\$	\$	
Fundraisers, events, sales:	\$	\$	
Other (Please define):			

**Total**

**\*Note: Pending sources of support include requests currently under consideration including possible Skokie Community Foundation grant. Please indicate anticipated decision date for all grants in narrative column.**

EXPENSES	Total Program/Project	SCF Grant Request	Narrative
Project (Please define):			
	\$	\$	
	\$	\$	
	\$	\$	
	\$	\$	
	\$	\$	
	\$	\$	
Staff salaries for services:	\$	\$	
Other (Please define):	\$	\$	

<b>Total</b>
<b>Revenue Over Expenses</b>