Request for Proposals – Grants – Communities Thrive Program

The Communities Thrive Program was designed by Northwest Minnesota Foundation in response to the brain gain trend of people in their late-20’s and 30’s moving back to rural areas. Research has found that people seek a simpler life, safety and security, affordable housing, outdoor recreation, and for those with children, a quality school. We also know that talent is the main driver of regional economic development and that quality of place is the essential ingredient in attracting and retaining a talented workforce. The Communities Thrive Program advisors chose Warroad and Halstad through a competitive process, and will work with them over the next two years to integrate grants, loans, and staff time to make their communities more vibrant.

Eligible Applicants
The Northwest Minnesota Foundation is accepting grant proposals from eligible 501c3 nonprofit organizations and public agencies (city, school district, county, township, higher education, et al.) serving the Halstad community through its Communities Thrive Program. The program is meant to support quality of life amenities that benefit area residents living and working in the Halstad community.

Priority Areas for Halstad
Proposals must serve the Halstad community, generally defined as Halstad and surrounding townships, and must serve one or more of the following priorities:

- School Building Preservation and Reuse
  - Projects should provide services, learning opportunities, or otherwise promote the use of the historic school building
- Community Beautification
  - Projects should improve the look and feel or overall community experience
- Arts and Culture
  - Projects should showcase unique local talents, landmarks, and history
- Lifestyle and Healthy Living
  - Projects may focus on diet, exercise, access, education, events, facilities, etc.
- Strengthening Supports for Small Businesses
  - Projects may support business growth and retention, start-ups, technology, learning opportunities, etc.
- Outdoor Recreation
Projects should focus on waterways, trails, parks, wayfinding maps and signage, events, planning, and similar efforts

- Housing
  - Projects may focus on community planning, direct services for individuals, or similar efforts to increase the number and quality of housing

- Childcare
  - Projects should grow the number and quality of childcare availability.

Proposals that identify a public need and the public benefit of grant funding will be considered as prioritized by the community, versus grants to benefit only a single organization. Collaborative efforts, youth-led projects, and advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives are also highly valued within the priorities listed above. Final grant approvals will be determined by Northwest Minnesota Foundation’s board of directors.

**Eligible Expenses**
Grants may fund new or existing programs, projects, studies, planning, collaborative work, capital projects, equipment, training, new or expanded staff, community engagement efforts, events, and other similar activities. Grants are meant to make a long term impact in the community.

**Ineligible Expenses**
Grants cannot fund political activities, religious propagation, discriminatory practices, past operating debts, legal fees, or similar activities.

**Funding Available**
Grant funding of $100,000 is available, with an average grant award of $15,000. Funding is first come-first serve, and open until funds spent or by June 2020 whichever comes first.

**Timeline**
Submit proposals for funding using the steps below:

1. Complete a brief organization and project summary using the link provided here: [https://www.nwmf.org/programs/preproposal](https://www.nwmf.org/programs/preproposal)
2. Complete a full grant application, which can be downloaded here: [https://www.nwmf.org/nmf-grant-application/](https://www.nwmf.org/nmf-grant-application/)
3. Email the completed grant application to Nate Dorr at nated@nwmf.org

**Contact**
Please address questions to:
Nate Dorr, VP for Advocacy
nated@nwmf.org
218-759-6522
Northwest Minnesota Foundation
201 3rd St. NW Bemidji, MN 56601