A GUIDE TO CLUB GRANTS

Kiwanis® CHILDREN'S FUND

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INTRODUCTION

Kids need Kiwanis. At the Kiwanis Children's Fund, we help Kiwanians reach them. In fact, that's our mission: to develop resources that transform the goodwill and vision of Kiwanians into programs that serve the children of the world. Often, we do that in ways Kiwanis clubs can't afford on their own.

In this guide, we'll provide an overview of the Club Grant program and the application process. We recommend that you print a copy of this guide to use as you work with us.

Club grants

A club grant helps address an unmet need that affects children in your community or elsewhere — by supporting a project that provides long-term benefits that can be sustained by the club.

For the Kiwanis Children's Fund, a grant is a form of collaboration. When a Kiwanis club has a gap in its funding for a service project, a club grant can help fill it. Not all Kiwanis projects are eligible for a grant through our Club Grant program.

Read on to determine whether your project is eligible.

Club grant requirements

Kiwanis clubs must be actively involved in grant-funded projects. When your club initiates and leads a project, your club invests time in development, coordination, fundraising and implementation — the kind of engagement that deepens your impact. Such engagement also raises the Kiwanis identity in your community.

Your project must:

☐ Be Kiwanis-led. This means at least 50% of the work must be performed by Kiwanians or Kiwanis family members.

☐ Fill a need within your community. Determine that need by completing a community needs assessment.

Learn more about community needs assessments on Page 7. Find an example online.

☐ Include programming that recurs at least once per year.

☐ Support activities within at least one Children's Fund cause area: health, education or youth leadership development.

☐ Receive at least 25% of total funding from your club.

This can come from club member donations, fundraisers, the club's bank account or a club's foundation.

☐ Require no more than 40% of total funding from the Children's Fund.

☐ Have at least one non-Kiwanis funding partner, such as a local church, school, non-profit or other community organization. Partners can take on a variety of roles — providing monetary or in-kind donations (i.e., supplies, storage space or volunteer hours) — but at least one partner must provide funding to your project.

Diversified funding sources increase the viability of long-term projects. Look here for information about additional funding sources.

☐ Spend the grant money within 12 months of when the grant was awarded.

Funding breakdown

The Children's Fund will provide up to 40% of the total cost of an eligible project selected for funding. For example, if your project costs US$10,000, it is eligible for a club grant of no more than $4,000.

Your club must contribute at least 25% of the total cost — $2,500 in the example above — but may contribute more.

Finally, at least one non-Kiwanis partner must contribute monetarily to your project. The amount of funding from this partner (or partners) may vary. In the grant application, you may include multiple partners' monetary or in-kind donations in your budget.

Here's an example of how the final budget might look for the example project above:

Source	Contribution
Club contribution:	$3,500
Children's Fund:	$4,000
Funding partner A:	$1,500
Funding partner B:	$1,000
Total funding and cost:	**$10,000**

Learn more about how to complete a budget by reviewing this resource or take a look at our sample club grant applications.

Ideal projects are:

- **Widely familiar.** A service project that your club is known for—or intends to be known for—throughout the community. Read more about marketing your project here.

- **Sustainable.** A project that your club can continue to maintain.

- **Recurring.** A project that can be done multiple times, over a long-term period.

- **Capable of being duplicated.** The kind of project that other clubs and districts can do, too.

- **Children- and community-focused.** Dedicated to improving kids' lives and the community around them.

- **High-impact.** Makes a significant difference in many lives.

- **Membership-focused.** Helps engage and retain current and new Kiwanis members.

- **Network-building.** Creates a strong, enduring link to community partners.

- **Unique.** Shouldn't compete with work another organization in the community is doing. If someone else is working on a need you feel especially motivated to meet, explore a partnership.

We will not consider requests for:

- Projects without a strong Kiwanis identity or at least 50% hands-on involvement.
- Grants intended to establish financial reserves or to fund projects that create a profit.
- Completed projects or expenses that have been paid, such as loans or reimbursements.
- Operating expenses or salaries of established programs and institutions.
- Funding more appropriately provided by a local government or institution.
- Individual assistance, one-time events, sponsorships, scholarships or fellowships.
- Scientific research or medical studies.
- Training expenses, travel or lodging.
- Capital construction projects or land/building purchase.
- Projects from Kiwanis clubs not in good standing with Kiwanis International.

KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

You're a Kiwanian. You want to serve your community. But to do it effectively, you must learn what your community *needs*. Conducting a community needs assessment will help you measure those needs and what is already being done to address them.

Conducting a community needs assessment

A community needs assessment is an essential requirement of the Club Grant program. It proves that your club's work is relevant and necessary. In fact, it is important that your club conduct the community needs assessment rather than relying on findings from another organization. You will gain a better understanding of the area you want to serve — whether it's an entire city or a small neighborhood. You will learn about the community's resources, engage with community members and potentially develop new community partnerships.

Here are some additional benefits:

- Your club will better understand what needs the community has, why they exist and how they can be addressed.

- Community members will become engaged with your club and how they can contribute to solutions.

- Your club can use the data you gather to make a case to other potential project funders.

- Other community organizations and members can use the data you collect. It can inform strategic planning, assist in priority setting and help improve existing programs.

Follow these steps to conduct your own community needs assessment. You can see examples of community needs assessments here.

STEP 1: Define the scope.

Community issues are complicated. One issue is often related to many others, and it's easy to expand the range of issues until it's hard to know what to do or where to begin. Remember, you need to identify the problem you want to solve before you create a project to address it.

Begin your community needs assessment by clearly identifying:

- The geographic area to be assessed
- The community members who will be served

As you conduct research, continuously ask yourself whether you are going beyond your original area of study. Remember, to qualify for a club grant, your project must address at least one Children's Fund cause area: health, education or youth leadership development.

This can be as big or small as you determine. For example, as big as a city or as small as a school in your community.

STEP 2: Decide whether to go solo or collaborate.

Your club can "go solo" and complete all of the community assessment activities on your own — or you can work with community partners to complete the assessment.

If you decide to collaborate, consider working with potential partners such as corporations, nonprofit organizations, local community organizations or foundations. By collaborating with others, you may gain additional resources, engage more community members and establish relationships beyond the reach of your club.

STEP 3: Collect data.

Collect data regarding the community need you have chosen to address. Remember to stay within the previously defined scope of your assessment.

There are different methods for collecting data. Your club can determine which data collection methods best suit you. Here are four examples:

Community meeting
This can be a public gathering that invites community members to discuss issues, voice concerns and express what the community's needs and priorities are. Choose a convenient time and location, and promote the event throughout your community. Set an agenda and follow it.

Focus group
While a community meeting will provide you with opinions from a broad audience, a focus group lets you hear from a specific, pre-selected group. If your project is associated with a school, you could create a focus group that includes parents, teachers and community members. Invite six to 12 people and select a club member to be a facilitator. With a smaller, more specific audience, you can hold more in-depth conversations, so prepare open-ended questions.

Interviews
Even more individualized than a community meeting or a focus group, interviews allow you to speak one-on-one with community members. You'll gain a deeper understanding of individuals' opinions. Questions should be prepared in advance, but this setting also allows for further conversation.

Survey

With a survey, you can collect information and opinions from community members in person or via email, phone or mail. Keep the survey short and simple, but make sure to explain its purpose and provide ample time for respondents to complete it.

Whether you gather data through one of the methods above or you choose your own, here are some useful tips:

- Establish goals.
- Prepare questions in advance.
- If meeting in person, select an easily accessible location and a convenient time.
- Set an agenda and follow it.
- Take notes.

STEP 4: Determine key findings.

You will likely collect a lot of data and information about your community's needs in Step 3. Next, analyze the data to identify your key findings, which will:

- Validate anecdotal evidence of community needs and assets.
- Highlight significant trends.
- Reveal differences across segments of the community.

Key findings can be organized into categories to help summarize the data. Common categories include strengths, gaps, opportunities and challenges.

## STEP 5: Set priorities and create an action plan.

Armed with key findings, your club can now make informed decisions about how to address your community's needs. Based on the key findings, create an action plan complete with goals and objectives for your project. Determine how you will measure your project's effectiveness and track it over time.

STEP 6: Share your findings.

Distribute your action plan — allow the community to benefit from your findings. Community members are more likely to support your efforts when they clearly understand the work you have done and how it meets the community's needs.

APPLY FOR A CLUB GRANT

Review & Approval

Letter of Inquiry

Grant Application
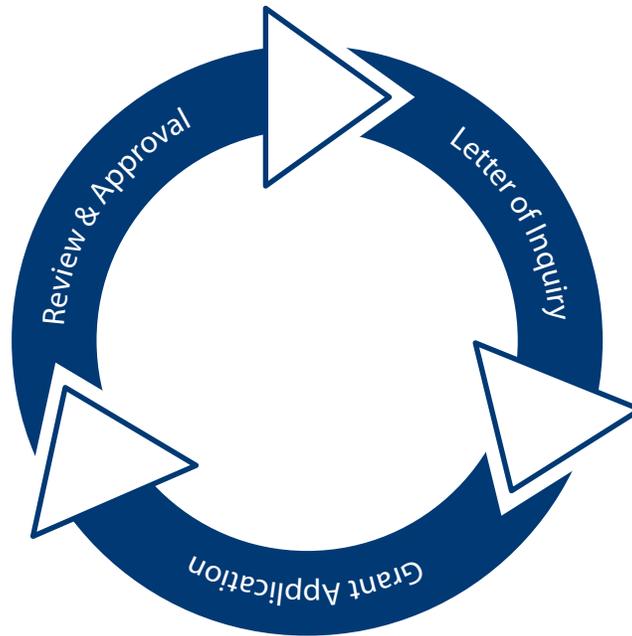
Letter of Inquiry

Applying for funding through the Club Grant program is a multi-step process that begins with a Letter of Inquiry (LOI). The LOI provides the Kiwanis Children's Fund with an overview of how your club plans to meet a defined, important community need in one of the following areas: health, education or youth leadership development. It also offers a unique feature in the philanthropic world — an opportunity for the grant seeker to get feedback from a potential funder.

You can improve the effectiveness of the process by giving yourself time to prepare and gather information. Using our online grant making system, Foundant, you will provide the following information about your club's project:

- Project overview
- Timeline
- Budget
- Community needs overview

The Children's Fund reviews LOIs on an ongoing basis. You can preview the LOI here.

How it works:

- After reviewing the LOI, a Children's Fund staff member will call you. This discussion helps our staff determine whether the project meets eligibility requirements and is a good fit for funding.

- During the call, the club's representative is notified whether the project has been approved to move forward in the process and apply for a grant.

- Clubs invited to complete a grant application will receive access to the full online application in Foundant.

- Give yourself time between submitting the LOI and the deadline so you can use feedback to make changes and resubmit the LOI if necessary.

- Clubs not invited to complete an application will be informed why the proposed project did not meet funding/eligibility criteria to move on to the application phase.

- Remember, being invited to apply doesn't guarantee you'll receive funding.

The LOI was implemented in 2017. This requirement streamlines the overall process. It initiates discussion, giving an early indication of a project's potential for funding — before the club invests the time and energy required for the more extensive grant application. And by making the whole process quicker, it allows us to increase our grant cycles to three each year.

This call will typically take place within two weeks. Please note, response times may take longer during high-volume periods, scheduled office closures, etc.

Grant application

If your project is approved to move forward, you will complete a full grant application. The grant application process provides essential information so a knowledgeable decision can be made based on a thoroughly considered club request.

The information you provided in your Letter of Inquiry will be "auto-filled" here. For some questions, you will be able to provide updated responses.

In addition, you'll be asked to answer new questions regarding your project's:

- Partnerships
- Sustainability
- Engagement with new and existing members
- Ability to elevate the Kiwanis image within your community
- Measurement of goals and impact

Review and approval process

Once your club's application has been submitted to the Children's Fund, it is reviewed according to the same criteria used for all applications. Funding recommendations are based on scores from the evaluation guidelines and shared with the Grants Committee, which makes final funding decisions.

The awarded grant amount may be less than the original requested amount.

Applications are scored according to whether the project will:

- Focus on service that also helps the Kiwanis club build membership.
- Increase the value of the member experience through direct service to children.
- Build a strong network of partners that supports service projects.
- Address a defined, important community need.
- Provide long-term benefits to children in the community.
- Involve Kiwanians in the development and delivery of service.
- Identify Kiwanis as the key participant in the project.

Grant application cycle

You can submit a Letter of Inquiry at any time during the year. Use the dates below to determine the cycle that best fits your project's timeline. Please note: Once funding decisions have been made, new grant partners will receive their grant funding after the required paperwork is completed.

For January 1 funding decisions:

- Submit Letter of Inquiry any time before September 1

- If approved, submit full application by November 1

For June 1 funding decisions:

- Submit Letter of Inquiry any time before February 1

- If approved, submit full application by April 1

For October 1 funding decisions:

- Submit Letter of Inquiry any time before June 1

- If approved, submit full application by August 1

RESOURCES & SUPPORT

The Kiwanis Children's Fund is ready to support your club throughout the grant-seeking process with these helpful resources:

- Evaluation guidelines
- How to use Foundant
- Video guide: How to use Foundant
- How to complete a budget
- Marketing your club project
- Funding opportunities
- Sample community needs assessments
- Sample applications
- Previously funded projects
- Club Grant program FAQs

Kiwanis Children's Fund staff members are also available at grants@kiwanis.org. You can also call 1-800-KIWANIS, ext. 225 (U.S. and Canada), or +1-317-217-6225 (worldwide).

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