



Community Grants Program Guidelines



The Ocean Reef Community Foundation grants programs are a direct result of the generosity of the Ocean Reef Community. The Community Grants Program provides support for qualified charities in the immediate and adjacent communities and prioritizes funding innovative approaches to address the root causes of community issues and empower our neighbors to be self-sufficient and successful.

The Foundation will consider Community Grants where a need for funding for building, equipment, improvements, increased efficiency, growth, programs, services, education, collaboration and innovation within our geographic limitations and project interest areas is presented through the annual application process. In considering requests, the Foundation will show preference for projects which relate directly or indirectly to the Ocean Reef employee base.

A request which asks the Foundation for a portion of the support for a project, and includes documentation of the other sources from which it has requested and/or obtained funds, will receive greater priority than one which looks to the Foundation as the sole funding source. The Grants Committee also prioritizes offering match grants in which each Foundation dollar granted will attract donations from other sources and will look favorably on organizations which maximize the opportunity.

The Community Grants Program seeks to fund projects which add to what a stable, established organization is able to offer the community and therefore does not fund grants to cover general operating/overhead or administrative expenses unless these are one time requests in initial stages of growing the organization or offering new programs. In such a case, this must be acknowledged and plans for how the organization anticipates funding these costs going forward should be included in the request.

The Ocean Reef Community Foundation policy is for staff and Grants Committee members to vet grant applicants, visiting personally whenever possible, and then to monitor recipients to verify that funding is being used in accordance with the terms of the Grant Agreement.

Program Priorities

The Community Grants Program prioritizes requests which:

1. Address the root causes of community issues
2. Empower people to be self-sufficient and successful
3. Initiate new programs and/or expand services throughout our defined areas
4. Leverage other funding sources and partnerships to attract additional support to our defined areas
5. Improve the ability of the organization to serve the community

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Projects Not Funded

- Individuals
- General operating/overhead or administrative expenses
- Fundraising events
- Endowment or memorial funds
- Those outside the geographic limitations set under these guidelines
- Those normally fully funded by government
- Religious activities or programs that serve predominantly one denomination
- Political organizations or campaigns

Specific Geographic Limitations & Project Interest Areas

Organizations not physically located within the geographic limitations below and/or those which serve a broader area must apply for a specific project which benefits the residents of our defined areas. Such applications must make clear exactly how the funds requested will be directed to benefit the appropriate population to be considered.

A) Primary areas of interest within the confines of Ocean Reef Club include all existing 501(c)(3) charities.

B) Primary areas of interest for the surrounding communities of Key Largo, Florida City and Homestead:

Education: preschool, primary, secondary and post-secondary education; job training, certification and continuing education; special needs education and other education issues

Youth: youth needs and programs, child development, youth development and youth leadership development

Health & Family Services: health care and human services which contribute to safe, healthy families

Community: projects that identify and address community needs and/or improve the organization's ability to serve the community

Note: Requests related primarily to the environment should be submitted directly to the Ocean Reef Conservation Association (www.oceanreefconservationassociation.org) and will not be considered unless they have a component which meets the above criteria.

C) The Grants Committee may also identify other areas when emerging needs and/or opportunities justify special consideration.

Community Grants Process Overview

Organizations must be classified as tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code guidelines to apply. The Grant Application must be submitted online with all supporting documents by the annual application deadline of November 1st to be considered for grants awarded in the spring of the following year.

An Optional Pre-Application to help determine an appropriate project prior to submitting the full application is available at our online portal. You can find that link on the Grant Application page of our website, www.oceanreefcommunityfoundation.org, along with the link to the online Grant Application. To discuss potential application projects and/or for more information, please contact the Foundation directly at foundation@oceanreef.com or (305) 367-4707.

Requests are reviewed by the Grants Committee and representatives of the Foundation may schedule a site visit. Final decisions are made between mid-March and mid-April with notification by e-mail no later than April 30th of the next year. Award checks are distributed upon the return of the signed Grant Agreement (and additionally, in the case of match grants, upon return of proof of meeting the match requirement). Grant Recipient Reports are due by March 1st of the year following the award. The completed report is mandatory to be considered for additional funding in subsequent grant cycles.