



Fund Advisory Committee Grant-Making Process

Being able to award grants in your community is one of the most rewarding and impactful responsibilities a Fund Advisory Committee (FAC) member has. The Northwest Minnesota Foundation (NMF) is here to support you every step of the way. This guide outlines best practices for planning and implementing a thoughtful, transparent, and community-centered grantmaking process.

NMF funds are local grant makers, and their success is built on strong stewardship, responsive strategies, and a commitment to building better lives in Northwest Minnesota.

Planning and Preparation

- **Define Purpose and Goals**
Clearly identify the impact your committee wants to achieve. What are your priorities based on? Do they align with current community needs and the purpose of your fund?
- **Set Eligibility Criteria**
Decide which organizations or projects qualify for funding (e.g., focus area, geographic location, budget size).
- **Establish a Grant Budget**
Determine the total amount available for granting and how you will allocate it.
- **Form a Grant Committee**
Select a diverse group (full committee or sub-committee) of your FAC to review applications and make grant recommendations.
- **Develop a Timeline**
Outline key dates for the grant round: announcement, application deadline, review period, and award notifications.
- **Stay in Touch with NMF**
Keep your NMF Philanthropy Officer informed. They're your partner in this process—offering resources, guidance, and celebrating your fund's impact.

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Application Process

- **Create Grant Guidelines**
Provide clear instructions to applicants: eligibility, evaluation criteria, required documents, and deadlines.
- **Develop Application Materials**
Prepare an application form or Request for Proposal (RFP), and draft a press release (templates provided in your toolkit). Include project description, budget, impact, and organizational capacity.
- **Launch a Call for Applications**
Collaborate with your Philanthropy Officer to promote the grant through NMF social media, community partners, and local media.
- **Provide Applicant Support**
Offer a contact (email or phone) for questions about the application process.

Review and Evaluation

- **Screen for Eligibility**
Remove any applications that do not meet your criteria.
- **Conduct Initial Review**
Assess the applications based on alignment with your goals and the potential for community impact.
- **Score and Rank Applications**
Use a standardized scoring rubric to ensure fairness and consistency.
- **Committee Review and Final Selection**
Discuss the top-ranked applications and agree on the final funding decisions.

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Awarding and Implementation

- **Submit Grant Recommendations**

Grant Recommendations can be submitted in two ways. You may submit them through the NMF Web Portal (<https://nwmf.spectrumportal.net/accounts/signin>) or complete the Grant Recommendation Form found in the toolkit (<https://nwmf.org/donors-giving/for-fund-advisors/toolkit/>), attach committee meeting minutes showing approval, and email to philanthropy@nwmf.org.

- **NMF Notifies Awardees**

NMF will send a grant award letter and check directly to the nonprofit or public entity. As a reminder, the minimum grant award is \$500. The fund advisors are responsible for notifying those whose grant has been denied.

- **Announce Grant Recipients**

Share the good news! Use local media and community channels to let donors and residents know how local contributions are making a difference. Press release templates are available for your use and they can be found in the marketing toolkit found here: <https://nwmf.org/donors-giving/for-fund-advisors/toolkit/>

Monitoring and Reporting

- **Evaluate the Grant Round**

Reflect on what worked well and what could be improved for next time.

- **Track Final Reports**

Grantees must complete a Final Grant Report (online link to final grant report sent with the award letter to the grantee). Your Philanthropy Officer will email it to you once received. Before launching a new grant round, confirm that all prior grantees have submitted their reports. It is NMF's recommendation that you should not grant to an entity again if they have not submitted a final grant report from a previous grant, unless the grantee has asked for an extension. Please keep this in mind when you are awarding your grants.

- **Collect Feedback**

Use insights from grantees, applicants, and your committee to strengthen future rounds.

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Stewardship in Action

Your fund is a vital part of NMF's mission to build better lives in Northwest Minnesota. Through thoughtful, responsible, and transparent grantmaking, your committee not only meets local needs but also inspires community trust and donor confidence. We are grateful for your leadership and proud to support you in making a lasting difference.

For questions, templates, or additional support, please reach out to your NMF Philanthropy Officer or visit www.nwmf.org.

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