

Ionia County Youth Advisory Committee

GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

PRIORITY AREAS

The Ionia County Community Foundation's Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) makes grants to organizations that benefit Ionia, Belding, Lakewood, Lowell, Portland, Saranac, and Pewamo-Westphalia youth and is composed of students representing high schools located in Ionia County and Lowell. A total of \$8,500 is available to award.

The Youth Advisory Council conducts a needs assessment every two years to identify funding priorities. Based on these results, **successful grantees will utilize "service-learning" to address the following youth issues in their communities:**

- Psychological and economic impacts of COVID-19
- Teen driver safety
- Academic motivation
- Achievement gap
- Substance abuse
- Depression
- Literacy
- Bullying
- Hunger

ELIGIBILITY

501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, government entities (including schools), or community groups with [fiduciaries](#) may apply for grants for programs that benefit Ionia County youth. Eligible organizations do not discriminate in hiring staff or providing services based on race, gender, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, age, national origin, or disability. Applications from religious organizations for a non-religious purpose will be considered. Grant proposals from religious organizations for a religious purpose and proposals to fund scholarships for individuals will not be considered.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Grant applications must be submitted electronically using the [grant portal](#) by **5:00 p.m. on Friday, February 6, 2026**. Applicants are notified of the YAC's decision the following May. Grand Rapids Community Foundation processes grant payments electronically. Partners who have not signed up to receive electronic payments will be required to do so before payment is processed.

HELPFUL HINTS

Grant proposals should assist the applying organization to implement a project or program that benefits youth. Proposals developed by youth or with youth involvement in planning are encouraged. The proposed project or program should:

- Have clear goals that are **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely, Inclusive, and Equitable**.
- Impact a significant number of Ionia County youth from birth to age 18.
- Avoid duplication with other projects and programs in the community.
- Address an identified priority area and make a significant difference for youth.

NEED HELP?

- For questions related to the content of your proposal, contact Ethan Ebenstein, member of Ionia County Community Foundation's Board of Trustees, at eebenstein@ioniaisd.org.
- For technical questions about the online grant application, contact Keri Jaynes at KJaynes@GRFoundation.org or 616.284.4911.

YOUTH GRANT APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Your grant application must be completed online through our [grant portal](#). All applicants need to create a new account and review their Organization Profile, which requires a listing of board members, organization description, primary contact, as well as current and last year's annual budget amounts. Applications require a brief project description, project start and end dates, and a project budget. Applications also require uploaded financial documentation. Examples of what you can provide include internal financial statements (balance sheet, cash flow statement, etc.), Form 990, or audited financial statements. The application requires narrative responses to the following questions:

- **Youth Involvement**

- Youth grants seek to support projects that not only have youth participants, but also build leadership capacity. Describe how youth take a leadership role in the planning and implementation of this project (Please note that youth participating in programs and submitting pre and post survey data is not sufficient) (Approximately 100 words)
- Estimate the number of youth who will participate, including age information (based on similar or past projects completed). (Approximately 50 words)
- How will youth be identified, selected, or recruited for participation in the project? How does the project engage diverse youth audiences? (Approximately 100 words)
- Describe the role of adults in the project, and their qualifications. (Approximately 50 words)

- **Youth Project Information**

- Describe your project as instructed below (Approximately 300 words)
 - Youth will review your application. Provide a SPECIFIC and CONCISE description of the proposed project or program.
 - Include a timeline and expected date of completion. **Project updates/progress reports will be due in December, so youth can review them ahead of the next grant cycle.**
 - Specify how often the activity will take place, the location, length of each session, and on how many occasions the activity takes place. (For example, an activity occurs twice a week for six hours per week, over a ten-week period.)
 - Briefly address how you will shift your program if health related restrictions are needed.
 - Include a website link for additional information on your project, if available.
- What is the goal of your project? Your goal should be Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic, and Time-bound, Inclusive, and Equitable. (Approximately 50 words)
- What issue area or need area (from the list on page 1) does your project address?
- What makes this project or program unique from others in the community? (Approximately 100 words)
- What specific and quantifiable measurement will you use to determine if your project was successful? If it is an existing program, what actions have you taken to improve it? (Approximately 200 words)

- **Budget**

- Which specific portion of the expenses listed in your project budget would be paid for with this grant? (Approximately 50 words)
- If this proposal is not fully funded, will you carry out the project? If so, where will you find funding? (Approximately 50 words)
- Provide a project budget (uploaded document or use the budget template)
- Upload financial documentation