

RURAL OKLAHOMA COMMUNITY GRANTS

2024 Grant Guidelines

IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

Grant Application Opens: Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Grant Information Meeting (Zoom): 3 p.m. on Tuesday, January 9, 2024 ([register here](#))

Letter of Intent (LOI) Deadline: 5 p.m. on Friday, February 9, 2024

Grant Application Deadline: 5 p.m. on Friday, February 16, 2024

GRANT RANGE: Up to \$40,000

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Carolyn Watson Rural Oklahoma Community Foundation was established in 1995 by Carolyn Watson, the CEO and chairman of Shamrock Bank N.A. To date, the foundation has distributed more than \$3 million to support nonprofit organizations in their efforts to enhance the quality of life in rural Oklahoma communities. The foundation's grant programs are administered by the Oklahoma City Community Foundation. For more information, visit www.occf.org/ruraloklahoma.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations serving rural communities within the following Oklahoma counties: **ADAIR, ATOKA, BRYAN, CADDO, CHEROKEE, CHOCTAW, COAL, HASKELL, JOHNSTON, KIOWA, LATIMER, MCCURTAIN, MCINTOSH, OKFUSKEE, OR PUSHMATAHA.**

NOTE: Priority will be given to projects targeting cities or towns with populations under 6,000.

FUNDING CATEGORIES

- 1) Arts, Culture & History
- 2) Health & Safety
- 3) Libraries & Literacy
- 4) Economic Development

CATEGORY 1: ARTS, CULTURE & HISTORY

- **Education and Access:** Initiatives to enhance education, public engagement, and access to arts, culture, and history.
- **Cultural and Historical Preservation and Enhancement:** Initiatives dedicated to preserving and celebrating the unique culture, history, and heritage of rural communities.

CATEGORY 2: HEALTH & SAFETY

- **Direct Health Services:** Initiatives providing essential health services to underserved or uninsured community members.
- **Healthcare Access and Capacity Enhancement:** Projects that improve access to health services or strengthen the public health workforce.
- **Community Safety and Security:** Projects aimed at enhancing local emergency and safety services, with an emphasis on supporting fire departments, EMS, and police departments.

CATEGORY 3: LIBRARIES & LITERACY

- **Library Enhancement:** Initiatives to strengthen rural libraries as key community and knowledge centers.
- **Community-based Literacy Programs:** Initiatives that take place outside of the formal education system to address community literacy needs. This can include early childhood and family literacy, tutoring programs, GED preparation, adult literacy, and English as a Second Language (ESL) programming.

CATEGORY 4: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Programs that promote economic growth and stability in rural areas through workforce development, entrepreneurship support, vocational training in areas such as business planning, financial literacy, and technology, and community asset enhancement to attract investments.

ELIGIBILITY

- 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that serve one or more of the eligible Oklahoma counties.
- Nonexempt organizations that qualify for the use of charitable dollars such as museums, libraries, schools, and other state or local government agencies may apply if the funding request is for public programs that take place in eligible Oklahoma counties.
- Grants will not be made to individuals or private foundations.

FUNDING LIMITATIONS

Funding for the following items is generally not considered:

- Fundraising events/activities.
- Capital campaigns.
- Vehicle purchases.
- Retroactive projects.
- Equipment unless central to the success of the project.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1) Submit a Letter of Intent (LOI)

All potential applicants must fill out an online LOI form **no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, February 9, 2024**. To complete an LOI, go to our online grant portal ([click here](#)) and refer to the instructions on the homepage to log in. Once logged in, you will select the “Apply” icon in the top left-hand corner of your screen and input the access code **ROCOMM24**. Please direct all login and access questions to Keaton Van Sickle at k.vansickle@occf.org.

2) Complete an Official Application

If you meet the eligibility requirements, you will receive an email granting you access to the official application. The deadline to apply is **5:00 p.m. on Friday, February 16, 2024**.

QUESTIONS?

Contact Leslie Woodward at L.woodward@occf.org / (405) 606-2911.

FAQs

If my organization received a Rural Oklahoma Community Grant last year, am I eligible to apply again this year?

Yes, you may apply if the following conditions have been met:

- The funds from your previous grant have been fully expended.
- All follow-up evaluation reports have been submitted.

When will I be notified of a funding decision?

All applicants will be notified of a decision by the end of March 2024 following the semi-annual Carolyn Watson Trustee meeting.

What is the timeline to implement my project/expend the awarded grant funds?

You may start your activities shortly after you receive notification of your award (late March 2024). If you would like to align your timeline with our funding cycle (outlined below), you will have approximately 11 months to finalize your project activities, utilize the awarded funds, and submit your final evaluation report. Please note that aligning your activities with our funding cycle is optional, but you will not be eligible for another grant until the conditions of the grant agreement are met.

Carolyn Watson Rural Oklahoma Community Grants Program Timeline (2024-25):

- **December 13, 2023 – February 16, 2023:** Application submissions
- **February – March 2024:** Internal and external application review process (**all current grantees who intend to reapply for funding must submit final evaluations**)
- **Late March 2024:** Trustee meeting and grant award notifications
- **April 2024 – late February 2025:** Project implementation

Can I submit more than one application?

Yes, but due to funding limitations, we are only able to award one grant per organization per funding cycle.

Can I request funding for the same program or project that I previously received a grant for?

Yes. Ongoing projects and programs are eligible for renewed funding.