
IOWA WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

Grant Review Process

Grant-making Philosophy

Support for the IWF Mission and Principles

The programs funded by IWF must be in accordance with the Foundation's mission and principles.

Social Change

The Foundation is particularly interested in funding projects and programs that go beyond provision of direct services to create underlying social change. We describe social change as changes in attitude, thinking, and practices of individuals that lead to changes in institutions and systems. The IWF recognizes that social change is fluid and it is defined and redefined by communities addressing their own needs and creating their own solutions.

Participatory decision-making

We seek innovative, results-oriented projects managed by grassroots groups, formal non-profit organizations, or individuals. The projects will work to empower women and girls and include methods by which those served actively participate in the planning and decision-making about the project or program. We work to fund programs that value input from the women/girls they serve.

A Gender Lens

Using a gender lens means examining a particular issue with a focus on the real life conditions of women and girls and acknowledging that gender is a powerful predictor of experience and opportunity. A program's design and intent should demonstrate an understanding of the role of gender in shaping the options available to women and girls. We believe that **responsiveness to gender issues includes more than simply serving a majority of women and/or girls.**

Strategic Priorities

The IWF's Board of Directors is responsible for all final decisions regarding the grants process and awards. In keeping with this responsibility, the Board sets specific strategic priorities for its grant program in support of its general grant-making philosophy and its strategic plan.



Investing in the dreams of girls and the power of women since 1994.

P.O. Box 3131 ❖ 320 Kirkwood Avenue ❖ Iowa City, IA 52240 ❖ 319.337.4222 ❖ www.iawf.org

Grant-making Process

Request for Proposals

Currently, the IWF has one grant-giving cycle per year. At this time, the IWF is unable to handle grant proposals outside of this annual cycle. The Foundation does, on occasion, enter into sponsorship arrangements with other organizations or programs. These are typically for one-time events or activities and the dollar amount of such sponsorships range from \$50—\$200. Sponsorship arrangements are determined by the Executive Director, in accordance with IWF's strategic plan.

The Grant Guidelines are available from the IWF office (319.337.4222 or info@iawf.org). Although it makes its guidelines available by fax or e-mail, the IWF does not accept proposals via fax or e-mail. Other limitations, directions, and qualifications are addressed in the Guidelines. Specific questions concerning the Guidelines and the grant-making process should be discussed with the Foundation's Executive Director.

The Selection Process

Community Review Panels

Community Review Panels are responsible for the first screening of the grant proposals. These Review Panels are committees of diverse members in various communities across the state. Each Panel looks at 6—10 proposals. The proposals are divided to ensure that groups do not review those from organizations in their own city or region. The Panel meets first to go through the guidelines for reviewing the proposals. When the members leave the first meeting, they take their stack of proposals and ranking sheets home to read. At the second meeting, the Panels discuss the proposals, and, using a nominal group process, rank their proposals for funding.

The Community Review Panel process is a confidential and closed process. Panel members are not to discuss the proposals with individuals outside the Review Panel. Panel members should not, under any circumstances, contact or communicate with individuals associated with the applicant organizations about their proposals to the IWF. Questions regarding any part of the process should go to the facilitator of the Review Panel. The facilitator can then contact the Foundation to address concerns or questions.

The Grants Committee

The Grants Committee is made up of representatives (facilitators) from all the Community Review Panels. The Grants Committee will evaluate the top-ranked proposals by all of the Community Review Panels, and any additional proposals that the Program Committee wishes to further evaluate. The Grants Committee evaluation will involve further scrutiny about how the proposal meets the IWF grant funding criteria, as well as examination based upon the Board strategic priorities for grant-making. Using the nominal group process, the Grants Committee develops a slate of funding recommendations for the IWF Board of Directors. Minutes should be taken at this meeting and included as part of the Grants Committee report to the Board. Representatives of the Grants Committee present this slate to the Board of Directors at a special Board meeting.

The IWF Board of Directors

The Board of Directors makes the final grant funding decisions based upon the funding slate developed by the Grants Committee. The Program Committee is the Board Committee that supports the Board's grant oversight responsibilities. This Committee develops and implements the Facilitator training workshop, reviews and revises grant cycle materials, and makes recommendations to the full Board regarding strategic funding priorities.

Board member input into the Grants Process

In light of this oversight responsibility, Board members, particularly those serving on the Program Committee, are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the proposals that the Foundation receives. Members may provide input into the grant selection process **after** the proposals come back from the Review Panels and **before** the proposals go to the Grants Committee. During this period before the CRP-ranked proposals go to the Grants Committee, Board members may request that the Program Committee read and review the CRP's ratings of specific proposals that are not included in the docket for the Grants Committee. Concerns or comments that a member has about the proposal should be outlined in a memo to the Program Committee. The Program Committee will then determine if the proposal in question should be included in those presented for review to the Grants Committee. If the Program Committee includes the proposal in the Grants Committee docket, both the information from the Community Review Panel AND the Board member's memo outlining the concerns and comments will be included in the materials with the proposal. Before requesting that the Program Committee reread proposals, Board members are encouraged to carefully consider the comments and rankings of the Community Review Panel.

Program Committee members and other Board members are welcome to attend the Grants Committee meeting as observers, with the understanding that they have no Board function at the meeting and they are **not** allowed to participate in the Grant Committee's discussion.

Representatives of the Grants Committee will present a slate of funding recommendations to the Board at a special board meeting specifically for discussion and review of the proposals included on this slate. Members will be provided with summary information about the project, as well as financial, demographic, geographic, and programmatic details about the projects. The Board and its members are strongly discouraged from introducing proposals not included on this slate to the Board's discussion. Minutes of the recommendation meeting will be recorded and available for review at the Board meeting when the funding decision is voted upon.

One week after the special Board meeting, the Board, as a part of a regular meeting, will vote on its final grant funding decision for the year. This portion of the Board meeting will be a closed session. Typically, the minutes for this portion of the meeting will record only decision outcomes.

The Grant Contract

The Iowa Women's Foundation (IWF) notifies everyone who submitted a proposal about the proposal's status. Those whose proposals are accepted for funding will be notified and provided with a grant contract outlining the terms of the grant.

The IWF requires that signed grant contracts be on file at the Foundation office before grant payment checks are disbursed. The application for the grant is part of the contract. If there are changes in the information provided on the application, these changes must be reported to the Foundation or if later in the grant period, other changes seem likely to occur, the expected changes must be reported immediately to the Foundation. Examples of the kinds of changes that must be reported include: change of address or contact name; changes in the organization's financial situation; the project's budget; the plans and schedule for the project; or involvement of other persons in the project. Changes that affect the nature of the project must be approved by the Foundation **PRIOR** to their implementation. The Foundation reserves the right to revoke the grant and require the grantee to make a full refund to the Foundation of all sums advanced if any misrepresentation is made in the application.

Funds granted for the project specified above must be expended during the contract period and the unused balance of funds returned to the Iowa Women's Foundation office.

The IWF requires that its grantees recognize the Foundation in publicity related to the project.