

Okoboji Foundation Grant Guidelines

The Okoboji Foundation only funds projects located in and serving the Iowa Great Lakes Region.

Reviewed and Revised 10/2025

Purpose

The Okoboji Foundation strengthens the **Iowa Great Lakes Region** by investing in natural resources, arts and culture, and outdoor recreation—ensuring that the Okoboji experience, its nostalgia, and its legacy endure for the families who live and visit here.

Areas of Focus

We fund projects in the **Iowa Great Lakes Region** that align with one or more of the following:

- **Arts & Culture** – Enriching community life and sustaining nostalgia and legacy for residents and visitors.
 - **Outdoor Recreation** – Expanding opportunities for active, healthy lifestyles.
 - **Lake Quality & Environment** – Protecting and sustaining our lakes and natural resources.
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Type of Funding

We fund **capital projects**—such as buildings, equipment, or physical property—that have long-term, visible, and community-wide impact in the **Iowa Great Lakes Region**.

Examples: trails, lakefront improvements, performing arts spaces, recreational equipment, community-use facilities.

Eligibility

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be a **501(c)(3) nonprofit** or a **government entity** operating within or directly serving the **Iowa Great Lakes Region**.
- Groups that do not meet the above criteria may apply through a **fiscal sponsor** that is a 501(c)(3) or government entity.
- Be current with all state and federal reporting requirements (e.g., IRS 990).
- Have no outstanding grant awards with the Okoboji Foundation.
- Only **one application per nonprofit organization annually** (multiple applications per EIN accepted).

Application Process

- Applications are submitted **online only** through the Okoboji Foundation website.
 - Applications must be submitted **in one sitting** (PDF version available to prepare answers ahead of time).
 - If you need to edit after submitting, contact Foundation staff before the deadline.
 - Late, incomplete, or hard copy applications will not be considered.
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Requirements & Restrictions

Eligible Projects

Projects must:

- Be **located in and serve the Iowa Great Lakes Region**.
- Be **visible, accessible, and beneficial to a large portion of the public**.
- Have a **long-lasting impact** that strengthens the community and region.

Special notes:

- Schools and municipalities should consider application only if projects:
 - Extend beyond core educational or governmental responsibilities.
 - Provide a broad and lasting benefit to the regional community.
 - Align with Foundation focus areas.

Ineligible Requests

The Foundation does **not** fund:

- Projects at 100% of cost (matching dollars or additional funding sources must be demonstrated).
- Operating costs (salaries, stipends, recurring expenses).
- Fundraising or feasibility studies.
- Marketing activities, programs, or events.
- Projects that have already been completed.
- School uniforms, School band needs, classroom needs etc.
- Short-term impact projects.
- Basic infrastructure or city services that fall within core duties of schools/municipalities.

Funding Levels & Grant Requirements

Leadership Grants

- Requests of **\$25,000 or more**.
- Reviewed by the Okoboji Foundation Grants Committee.
- May include an in-person presentation.
- Projects must be completed and reimbursed within **3 years** of award.

Community Needs Grants

- Requests of **under \$25,000**.
- First reviewed by the **Youth in Philanthropy Committee**.
- Unfunded requests will be considered by the adult Grants Committee.
- Projects must be completed and reimbursed within **1 year** of award.

Note: All applications submitted by a school—regardless of request size—are reviewed only by the adult Grant Committee.

Strengthening an Application

Applications are more competitive when they demonstrate:

- **Matching funds or partnerships** that share project costs.
 - **Community investment**, such as donations from individuals, businesses, or other organizations in the **Iowa Great Lakes Region**.
 - **Collaborations or partnerships** showing broad support and shared responsibility.
 - **Community benefit**, with clear data on the percentage of residents/visitors impacted.
 - **Sustainability and long-term impact**, ensuring the project benefits endure for years to come.
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Recognition

Professional signage must be included on structures or property funded by Foundation grants. The Okoboji Foundation will provide official logos and style guidelines for signage.