

# **Transylvania County Community Center Support Grants Policy and Procedure FY 2023-2024**

## **Policy**

Based on the Transylvania County Strategic Plan, the County Commissioners desire to collaborate with eligible community centers in ways that allow for county services authorized by the legislature to be provided in better ways to citizens. Transylvania County will ensure that the Community Center Support Grant program, which governs the application for and distribution of funds to community centers, is conducted in accordance with state law and in a transparent manner.

- All contracts shall meet Article V Section 2(1) of the NC Constitution that requires all public funds be expended for the benefit of the citizens generally, and not solely for the benefit of particular persons or interests, with all programs and capital uses funded open to the public for public use.
- In order for a local government unit to fund a project, the local government must be authorized to execute that project by the Local Government Fiscal Control Act (NC G.S. 159)
- Only non-profits that are recognized by the *Internal Revenue Service* (IRS) as a 501(c)(3) can be funded.
- All entities receiving public dollars shall provide reports demonstrating the outcomes of how those public funds were utilized (S.L. 2012-169).

## **Eligibility**

Community center grant funding is open only to those centers determined to be 'active' during the 12 months. To be considered 'active' community centers must have completed 4 of the 5 actions below during the prior year.

1. Elect community center board officers
2. Hold board meetings, at least quarterly, with minutes documented
3. Host at least six (6) events open to the public
4. Publish at least six (6) community center sections in *The Transylvania Times*
5. Maintain an up-to-date website, Facebook, or social media page

All eligible applicants must be recognized as 501(c)(3) status organizations by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.

## **Call For Projects**

Transylvania County issues an annual call for funding based on funds adopted in the budget. For FY 23-24, there are three grant programs associated with community centers in the county: the Non-Competitive Connected Public Space Grant, the Competitive Public Health/Safety Grant, and the Competitive Project Grant.

### **1. Non-competitive Connected Public Space Grant (awarded to all eligible applicants)**

All projects from applicants that meet the basic eligibility requirements outlined in section titled Eligibility above and commit to having their facilities available to the public for wi-fi use on most school days per year will be funded. Applicants must choose the level of service they need to provide under the *Connected* component of this grant program and outline how they will utilize *Public Space* funding.

#### ***Connected***

This noncompetitive grant is awarded to all qualifying applicants to assist with expanding the access to connected public spaces in Transylvania County.

- Transylvania County will reimburse successful applicants the costs associated with having their choice of

connected communications for one year. Future year funding will be dependent on budget funds available.

- Centers must opt for telephone service and wireless internet service.
- Centers opting for wireless internet and/or cell service may be reimbursed up to \$125 for a “Hot Spot” sign advertising your center’s expanded services.

(approximate prices at time of initial call for projects)

			One-time Service Fee	Monthly Service Fee	12-months of service fees
Comporium	Wi-fi	DSL & router	None	\$67	\$804
Comporium	Telephone	Cable & modem	\$50	\$105	\$1260

### **Public Space**

- Centers will receive \$1,500 to offset general operating expenses including electricity, heating, insurance, and upkeep in addition to the actual cost reimbursement to provide Wi-Fi, telephone, and cell phone extender service.

### **Continuation of Funding**

- Recipients of Grant 1 (Non-competitive Connected Public Space Grant) in the previous year who are seeking to be awarded that same funding in Fiscal Year 2023 – 2024 need to comply to all the above-mentioned requirements and designate on their application that they are requesting continued funding.

## **2. Competitive Public Health / Safety Grant (up to 4 awards annually of \$2,500 each)**

These competitive matching grants of up to \$2,500 each will be awarded to projects that *serve public health and/or safety* via minor improvements in public health or safety at community centers. A 10% match with funds raised by the community center for the project is required to receive funds.

Projects are not limited to, but could include:

- support /programming for children, youth, and families
- emergency preparedness
- bathrooms:
  - upgraded and/or made ADA compliant
  - reconfigured to be accessible from the outside for use when the building is closed
  - porta-johns installed and maintained
- building and grounds:
  - upgraded walkways, stairs, entrances and exits, railings, etc.
  - smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
  - mold remediation
  - safe passage for those walking to centers
- playgrounds upgraded with new/modern equipment and/or play surfaces
- improvements to areas for athletic activity (walking trails, sports courts)
- community gardens

## **3. Competitive Public Purpose Project Grant (up 2 awards annually of \$7,500)**

These competitive match grants of up to \$7,500 each *serve a public purpose* in the community by supporting significant projects improving or expanding public space and activity programming. A 10% match with funds raised by the community center for the project is required to receive funds.

Projects are not limited to, but could include:

- New or significantly improved picnic shelters, playgrounds, ball courts, dog parks, exercise areas, etc.
- stand-alone, permanent bathroom facilities
- kitchen upgrades
- repair or replacement of roofs, windows, gutters, etc.

### **Grant Procedure**

Within fifteen (15) days after the application deadline, a review committee will evaluate the applications and determine distribution of funds. The review committee may include up to two Commissioners, the County Manager, County Finance Director, a County Planning and Community Development Representative and a representative from the County's Maintenance and Engineering Department.

The following criteria will guide evaluation of grant applications:

- Services that supplement or enhance existing county services within statutory guidelines
- Support of the Transylvania County Strategic Plan
- Impact (measurable outcomes) of the grant funded project

Transylvania County will notify successful applicants sixty (60) days after the application deadline. To receive funding, successful applicants must sign a Non-Profit Funding Agreement with Transylvania County. After an executed agreement is in place, organizations may submit receipts to the Transylvania County Finance Office for reimbursement.

# Transylvania County Community Center Support Grants Policy and Procedure Appendices

## Appendix A

### Support the Transylvania County Strategic Plan

Grant applications must demonstrate how the project's measurable outcomes support the Strategic Plan developed and adopted by the Transylvania County Commissioners. The complete version of the plan can be found on-line at <http://www.transylvaniacounty.org/county-strategic-plan>. For convenience, the following are excerpted goals and strategies that may support proposed community center projects.

- Goal #1:** The local economy has a more diversified tax base, an increase in living wage jobs and has more stability. The community has capitalized on the unique quality of life and environment unique to the area.
- **Strategy 1B:** Plan, advocate and provide for infrastructure to support economic development and to make the community a desirable place to live and work.
  - **Strategy 1C:** Protect the community sense of place by balancing growth and maintaining high levels of community social infrastructure like parks, quality education, tourism, etc.
- Goal #2:** The educational environment facilitates learning, and students are being prepared for a successful future. There are more available resources for enhancing education for all ages.
- **Strategy 2A:** Provide resources to support quality educational opportunities with a standard of excellence.
  - **Strategy 2B:** Provide support resources that eliminate barriers to receiving education.
- Goal #3:** The community has vibrant nodes of economic and civic activity that create a draw for tourism as well as a platform for community engagement.
- **Strategy 3A:** Support infrastructure that facilitates the visitor's unique experience of our community and encourages them to visit again.
  - **Strategy 3B:** Support community involvement in civic activities across demographics and geographies.
  - **Strategy 3C:** Protect and preserve cultural heritage and promote arts in the community.
- Goal #4:** The wealth of natural resources in Transylvania County have been well managed and maintained to support the local economy and quality of life with plans in place to assure sustainability.
- **Strategy 4A:** Protect and preserve natural resources with long term management plans including water, air and forest resources to insure long term sustainability.
  - **Strategy 4B:** Educate the public on environmental concerns and best practices.
- Goal #5:** The community's quality of life includes resources that promote health, transportation connectivity, a sense of place, cultural heritage, and public safety.
- **Strategy 5A:** Provide framework for Prevention, Response, and Recovery for individual and community wide emergencies in Transylvania County.
  - **Strategy 5B:** Provide resources, infrastructure and services that improve public health, mental health, wellness, and safety to insure a vibrant community.
  - **Strategy 5C:** Preserve and educate about cultural heritage of the community.
  - **Strategy 5D:** Partner with existing agencies on community needs.