



Omaha Venture Group is a way for emerging leaders to learn about grassroots grantmaking – a way of donating money that builds connections among donors, nonprofits, and the community. Our members are ready to go into the field and learn first-hand about the issues that face small and emerging nonprofit agencies across the Omaha region. We then discuss how our pooled funds can be allocated most effectively to help these agencies serve their clients more effectively and grow stronger organizationally.

It's more than getting to know about the nonprofit sector, however. Members report that networking and getting to know like-minded young professionals are valuable parts of their OVG experiences as well. OVG also has volunteer leadership positions filled on an annual basis. Further, the matching funds – provided by Omaha area foundations – leverage members' donations to further increase the pool of available funds.

The OVG season kicks off in late autumn with recruiting events and membership sign-ups. In early January, members start work on identifying, contacting, and meeting with eligible nonprofits within four Interest Group areas:

YOUTH: organizations that serve children and adolescents, such as mentoring programs, after school sports, and art classes

ADULT/SENIOR: organizations whose clients are adults or, more specifically, seniors. These include agencies that provide day programs for the elderly, re-entry services for ex-offenders, and resources for immigrants and refugees.

COMMUNITY: organizations that serve the community at large, such as public art projects, food pantries, and neighborhood groups.

LEGACY: organizations that have been past recipients of grant funding from the Omaha Venture Group.

By late March, Interest Group members select nonprofits to submit proposals, which are due in late April. The full grantmaking membership comes together for Vote Night in May to discuss all of the proposals and hear funding recommendations from each Interest Group. A round of voting leads to the finalization of grant amounts, which are announced at the celebratory Grant Night event in early summer.

Throughout the process, we also host monthly education/social events, where all members come together to socialize and network before turning to a guest speaker, who might be a previous year's grant recipient reporting on how their OVG funds were used or a local expert on philanthropy.