



**Omaha Community
Foundation**



Community Interest Funds

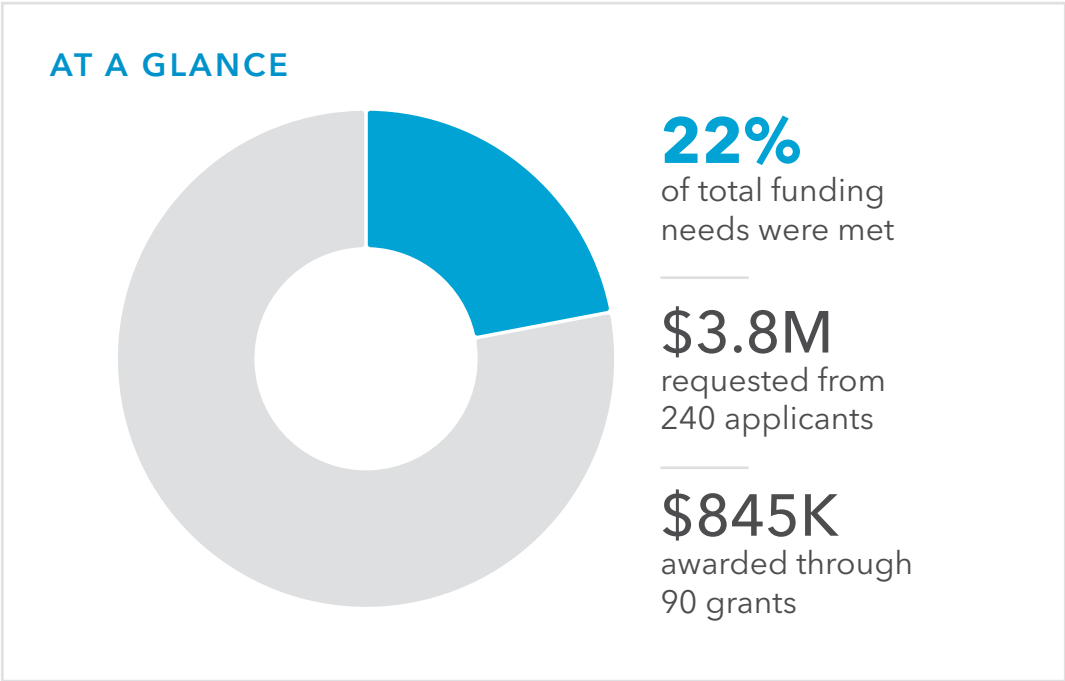
2024 OVERVIEW & GIVING GUIDE

Community Interest Funds

Guided by the decisions of 44 committee members, the Omaha Community Foundation awarded **90 grants totaling \$845,000** to local nonprofits and neighborhood groups in the 2024 grant cycle. These funds were distributed across our five Community Interest Funds: the African American Unity Fund, Futuro Latino Fund, LGBTQIA2S+ Equality Fund, Refugee Community Grant Fund, and Omaha Neighborhood Grants.

Grants made through our Community Interest Funds are strategic investments meant to increase access, equity, and opportunity. We engage community members to lead grant processes, and we rely on them to exercise and apply their own power and understanding.

Each committee is made up of residents who come from or identify with the population being served. They review proposals and decide which projects will have the greatest impact based on the needs they see in their communities.



Cover photos clockwise from top left: Community Interest Funds Grantee Celebration, Refugee Women Rising, SkateFest Omaha, Healing Ribbons, H2O Collective, Heartland Pride

OUR MODEL

Resident-led grantmaking leverages the insights, connections, and lived experiences of residents who serve as both community advocates and responsive stewards of investment dollars. This model democratizes philanthropy by engaging and working alongside rather than being prescriptive and doing unto a community.

We made this model a priority for three main reasons.

1

It reduces inequity and decentralizes power.

Involving residents in the grantmaking process makes it accessible to under-resourced communities. It's a shared opportunity for the funders to get a better understanding of what priorities exist throughout the city. It also allows residents to amplify the awareness of smaller, grassroots organizations that are offering effective programs and services but may be otherwise overlooked.

2

It deepens authentic relationships.

Through these resident-led grant committees, we get to know individuals who identify as members of each community, and, in turn, they get to know us. The partnership model develops and deepens relationships in these communities.

3

It strengthens trust between donors and grantees.

By placing the communities we serve at the heart of the decision-making process, resident-led grantmaking shifts power to community members to decide which programs and services will best support and uplift those closest to the issues. Changing who determines grant funding can result in more equitable awards that truly reflect the communities' needs. This model requires more listening, engagement, and vulnerability.



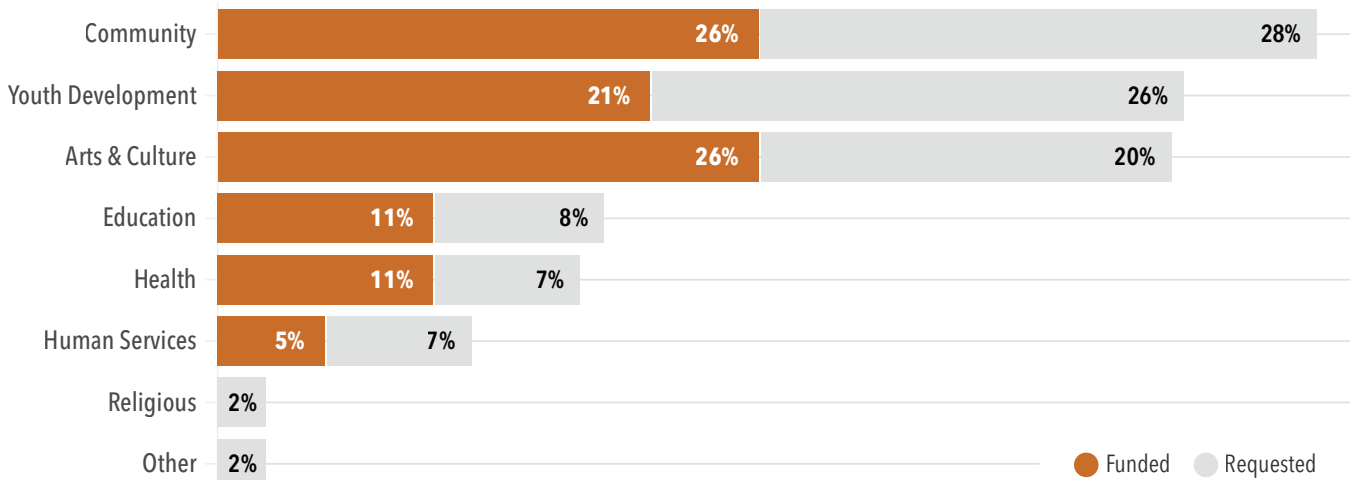
Melanin Market Omaha

African American Unity Fund

Established in 2008, the African American Unity Fund has been a cornerstone in supporting vital initiatives within Omaha’s Black community. The fund encourages collaboration among multiple organizations, fostering a collective impact that resonates across the metro area.

This year, the most significant demand was in the focus areas of Community, Arts & Culture, and Youth Development. These three categories accounted for more than 70% of total grant requests. The committee members prioritized these needs and directed substantial support there.

KEY INSIGHTS



2024 GRANT RECIPIENTS

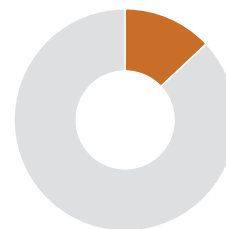
The committee awarded \$225,000 to 20 organizations. The African American Unity Fund received 85 applications with grant requests totaling \$1,745,350.

- ▶ **Access Period:** \$10,000 for Period Supplies for Girls
- ▶ **All In The Family Mentoring & Support Services:** \$12,000 for Youth Mentoring Program
- ▶ **Black Student Leadership Council:** \$20,000 for Projects and General Operations
- ▶ **Bobby Byars Foundation:** \$15,000 for 2024 Community Safety Day
- ▶ **Change of Omaha:** \$5,000 for Capacity Building
- ▶ **Emerging Ladies Academy:** \$10,000 for Tech Academy
- ▶ **EPIC for Girls:** \$10,000 for EPIC Community of Practice
- ▶ **Everyday Science and Science Support Nonprofit:** \$10,000 for River City Math Rodeo Events
- ▶ **Femi's Heart Foundation:** \$3,000 for Enhancing Health: Community Blood Drive
- ▶ **Healing Roots African Diaspora Garden:** \$14,000 for Rooted: Reclaiming Black Gardening Culture
- ▶ **House of Bah Foundation:** \$10,000 for Operational Support
- ▶ **Ivy League Youth Sports Academy:** \$10,000 for Basketball Program
- ▶ **J's Braintrust Consulting Services Inc.:** \$10,000 for Sports Officiating Training
- ▶ **Melanin Market Omaha:** \$14,000 for Operational Support
- ▶ **Midlands African Chamber:** \$10,000 for MAC-X BIPOC Financial Freedom Program
- ▶ **Omaha Chapter of the Links, Incorporated:** \$12,000 for Links Locs Love
- ▶ **Pear Tree Performing Arts:** \$15,000 for Operational Support
- ▶ **Room For Roots:** \$10,000 for Priscilla's Way Economic Development Program
- ▶ **SkateFest Omaha:** \$10,000 for Walnut Hill Pocket Park
- ▶ **The House of Afros, Capes & Curls:** \$15,000 for Capacity Building



"My nonprofit was a grant recipient for AAUF funding, and now I can empower other AAUF grant seekers to bring their best ideas and programs to the committee for funding support."

AKILE BANISTER
2024 Committee Member



13% of total funding needs were met

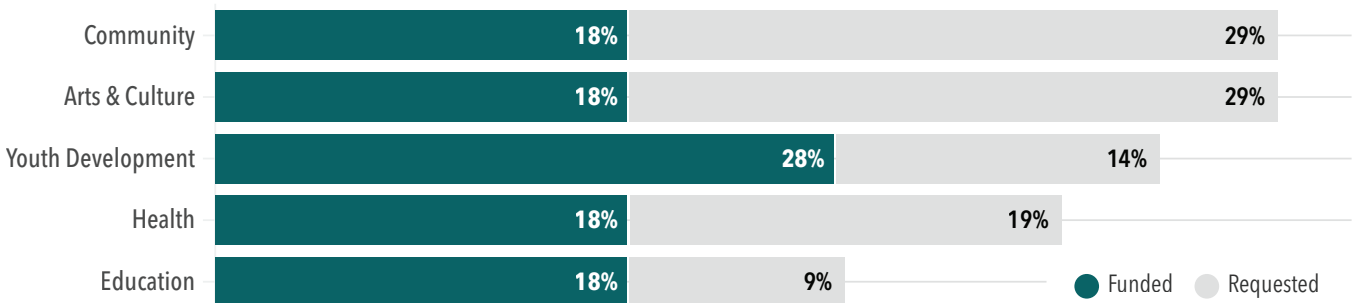


Futuro Latino Fund

Established in 2009, the Futuro Latino Fund enriches culture, improves socioeconomic well-being, fosters civic engagement, and ensures long-term sustainability within the local Latino community. The fund promotes self-sustaining models and capacity-building strategies that address the diverse interests of Latino families, neighborhoods, and organizations.

This year’s grant requests were concentrated in the focus areas of Arts & Culture, Community, and Health, making up more than 75% of the total. The committee balanced these priorities while allocating a larger share of funds to Youth Development and Education initiatives, highlighting a strategic focus on empowering the next generation and enhancing educational opportunities.

KEY INSIGHTS



2024 GRANT RECIPIENTS

The committee awarded \$175,000 to 12 organizations. The Futuro Latino Fund received 21 applications with grant requests totaling \$385,190.

- ▶ **A Mother's Love:** \$20,000 for Latina Doula Services
- ▶ **DIBS for Kids:** \$15,000 for Spanish Books for Omaha Public Schools
- ▶ **For All Counseling Services:** \$20,000 for Specialty Mental Health Care
- ▶ **H2O Collective:** \$10,500 for D'Colores
- ▶ **Jackson Boxing Club:** \$15,000 for Overhead, Competition Travel, Fundraising, and Equipment
- ▶ **Latino Economic Development Council:** \$20,000 for Capacity Building
- ▶ **LIVE Leadership Camp:** \$12,500 for Latina Camp, Community and Culture
- ▶ **Metro Young Latino Professionals Association:** \$12,000 for MYLPA Scholarship and Professional Development
- ▶ **Mexican American Historical Society of the Midlands:** \$8,400 for El Corazon de Nuestra Gente
- ▶ **RESPECT:** \$3,000 for Dating Violence Prevention Using Theatre
- ▶ **Soundarte.net:** \$20,000 for 2024 Post-Digital Art Program
- ▶ **True Potential Scholarships:** \$18,600 for Scholarships for Immigrants



"My involvement has enriched my understanding of the community and its needs by highlighting projects that community members are passionate about. I've also gained a deeper understanding of the challenges our residents face and the opportunities available to address them."

CLAUDIA GRANILLO
2024 Committee Member



45% of total funding needs were met



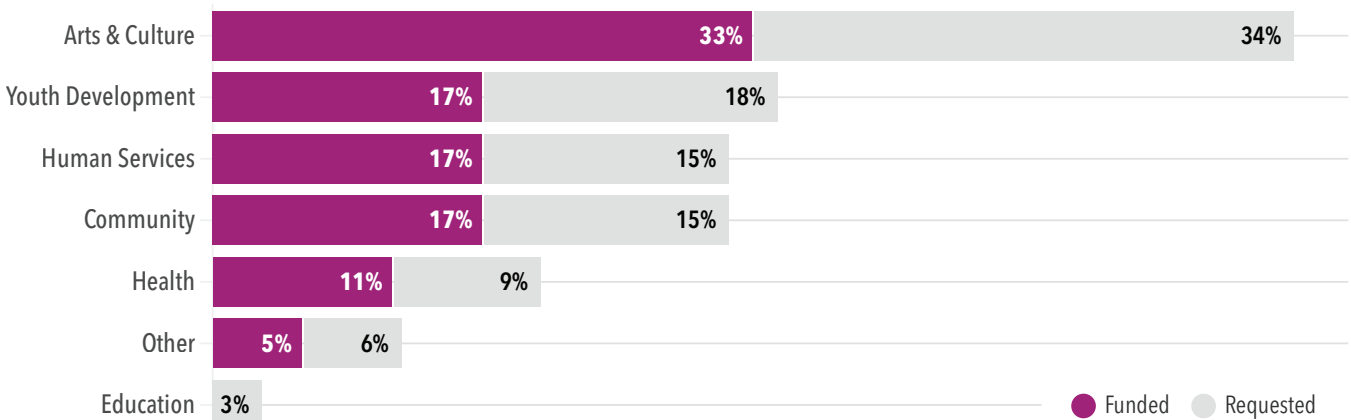
Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands

LGBTQIA2S+ Equality Fund

Since 2018, the LGBTQIA2S+ Equality Fund has cultivated an inclusive community in Omaha, supporting expansive gender and sexual identities. The fund is dedicated to building strong support networks, amplifying voices, and addressing inequities across social, economic, political, and justice systems.

This year, Arts & Culture initiatives received the most requests and funding, emphasizing the importance of authentic expression and visibility. Youth Development, Community initiatives, and Human Services received substantial support, closely aligning with the requested percentages and reinforcing the fund's commitment to inclusivity.

KEY INSIGHTS



2024 GRANT RECIPIENTS

The committee awarded \$200,000 to 18 organizations. The LGBTQIA2S+ Equality Fund received 33 applications with grant requests totaling \$660,133.

- ▶ **ACLU of Nebraska Foundation:** \$20,000 for Defending LGBTQIA2S+ Rights
- ▶ **BFF Omaha:** \$10,000 for "Judy Jam" On-Street Pride Activation
- ▶ **Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands:** \$10,000 for LGBTQIA2S+ Youth Mentoring
- ▶ **CEDARS Youth Services:** \$15,000 for Street Outreach Program
- ▶ **FAMILY, Inc.:** \$3,500 for The Affirming Medical Provider List
- ▶ **Great Plains Theatre Commons:** \$10,000 for PlayFest: Stuck with Lemons
- ▶ **Healing Ribbons:** \$15,000 for Art of Healing
- ▶ **Heartland Pride:** \$10,000 for Youth Pride and Scholarship Program
- ▶ **Inclusive Communities:** \$10,000 for IncluCity Youth Leadership Development Camp
- ▶ **Legal Aid of Nebraska:** \$5,000 for LGBTQIA2S+ Name Change Clinic
- ▶ **Nebraska AIDS Project:** \$18,250 for Sexual Health Promotion Tour
- ▶ **Nebraska Writers Collective:** \$5,000 for 2024/25 All Writes Reserved Program
- ▶ **Omaha ForUs:** \$15,000 for Best Life Behavioral Health/Wellness
- ▶ **Omaha Theater Company:** \$5,000 for Teens 'N' Theater Season #30
- ▶ **OutNebraska:** \$10,000 for LGBTQ+ Training for Omaha Area
- ▶ **Planned Parenthood of the Heartland:** \$13,250 for Holistic Care for LGBTQIA2S+ Patients
- ▶ **Preserve Omaha:** \$10,000 for LGBTQIA2S+ History of Omaha Map
- ▶ **River City Mixed Chorus:** \$15,000 for Pauli Murray: A New Commissioning



"I love to see how many nonprofits apply, the diversity of the programs they are uplifting, and the impact those programs can make on our communities."

CHRISTINA ARELLANO
2024 Committee Member



30% of total funding needs were met

The LGBTQIA2S+ Equality Fund is a collaboration between the Sherwood Foundation, Mutual of Omaha, Conagra Brands Foundation, and Peter Kiewit Foundation. It is administered by the Omaha Community Foundation.



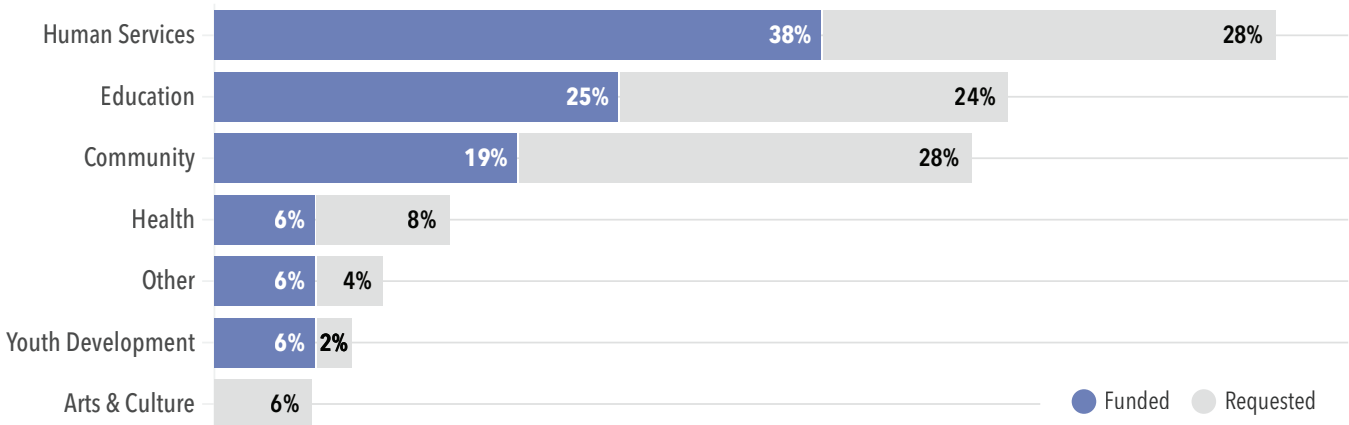
St. Pius X / St. Leo School

Refugee Community Grant Fund

The Refugee Community Grant Fund, established in 2020, prioritizes the unique needs of Omaha’s refugee community by supporting refugee-led organizations and critical services.

This year, 80% of funding requests fell into the focus areas of Human Services, Education, and Community. Human Services initiatives received the largest share of funding, while Education initiatives also saw strong support, closely aligning with the requested amounts. This focus highlights the fund’s commitment to addressing areas with immediate and lasting impact.

KEY INSIGHTS



2024 GRANT RECIPIENTS

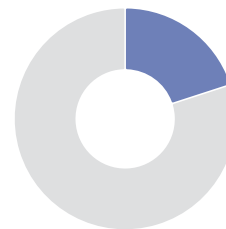
The committee awarded \$165,000 to 16 organizations. The Refugee Community Grant Fund received 50 applications with grant requests totaling \$817,622.

- ▶ **Cornerstone Nonprofit Healthcare:** \$12,500 for Health Fair Project
- ▶ **Heartland Bike Share:** \$7,800 for Reduced Cost Memberships for Refugees
- ▶ **House of Bah Foundation:** \$5,000 for Immigrant Culinary Integration
- ▶ **Immigrant Legal Center + Refugee Empowerment Center:** \$15,000 for Case Management
- ▶ **Intercultural Senior Center:** \$15,000 for Refugee Meals and Nutrition Classes
- ▶ **Learning For ALL:** \$12,200 for ESL and GED for Refugees
- ▶ **MAC Foundation:** \$5,000 for Restoring Refugees Socio-Economic Dignity
- ▶ **Nebraska Diaper Bank:** \$7,500 for Changing Diapers Changing Lives
- ▶ **Refugee Women Organization of Nebraska:** \$7,500 for New American Urban Farmer
- ▶ **Refugee Women Rising:** \$10,000 for Driving Independence: Acts of Resilience
- ▶ **Restoring Dignity:** \$15,000 for Welcome Home Refugee Education Program
- ▶ **Seventy Five North:** \$10,000 for Highlander Neighborhood Summer Tutoring
- ▶ **St. Pius X / St. Leo School:** \$12,500 for English Language Teacher Assistant
- ▶ **The Bloc:** \$10,000 for Board of Directors
- ▶ **The Furniture Project - Omaha:** \$10,000 for Refugee Furniture Distribution
- ▶ **Yates Fund - Yates Illuminates:** \$10,000 for Connecting People by Sharing Meals



"Involving community members allows funders to transfer the power of giving and impact to the community. This process creates trust and partnership with philanthropy and community."

OSUMAN ISSAKA
2024 Committee Member



20% of total funding needs were met

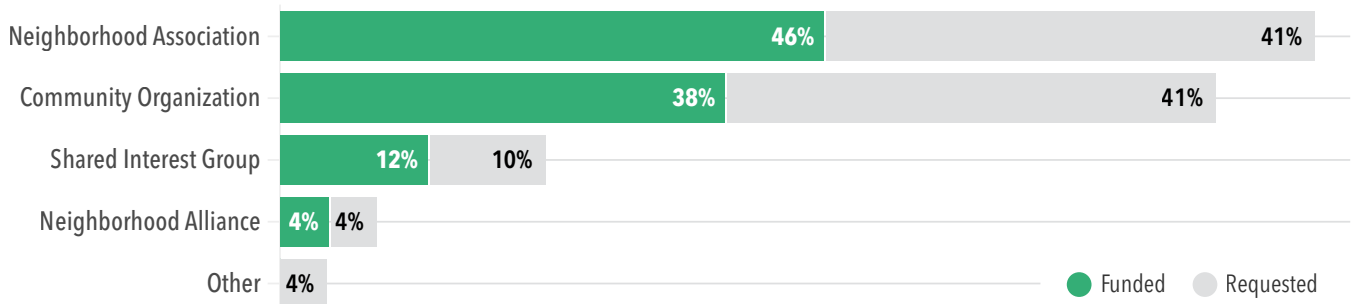


Omaha Neighborhood Grants

The Omaha Neighborhood Grants program is designed to support community leaders who are making a positive impact in their own neighborhoods. It empowers residents to take action and work together to address local priorities.

The primary goal is developing leadership skills among residents, including project planning, consensus-building, fundraising, and teamwork. Applicants are also encouraged to promote collaboration, increase neighborhood engagement, and provide benefits like enhanced safety and beautification.

KEY INSIGHTS



2024 GRANT RECIPIENTS

The committee awarded \$80,000 to 24 organizations. The Omaha Neighborhood Grants program received 51 applications with grant requests totaling \$201,403.

- ▶ **BFF Omaha:** \$5,000 for District-Wide Outdoor Community Facilities
- ▶ **Bemis Park Neighborhood Association:** \$5,000 for Bemis Park Tennis/Pickleball Court Renovation
- ▶ **City Sprouts Omaha:** \$2,550 for Family and Friends Fun Night
- ▶ **Country Club Historic District Neighborhood Association:** \$1,500 for Community Engagement
- ▶ **Dahlman Community Garden:** \$1,150 for Rainwater Capture/Additional Beds
- ▶ **Dundee Community Garden:** \$2,186 for Cultivating Community
- ▶ **Free Farm:** \$5,000 for Improved Engagement and Community Involvement
- ▶ **Gifford Park Neighborhood Association:** \$4,716 for Building Healthy Habits Through Gardening
- ▶ **Global Leadership Group:** \$5,000 for Accessible Garden Beds
- ▶ **Great Plains Theatre Commons:** \$3,500 for Stories of O
- ▶ **Hartman Avenue Neighborhood Association:** \$5,000 for Community Garden
- ▶ **Hillsborough Association of Landowners:** \$5,000 for Picnic in the Park
- ▶ **inCOMMON Community Development:** \$2,500 for Community Space Fencing
- ▶ **Leavenworth Neighborhood Association:** \$1,866 for Communicate, Reinvigorate, Rebuild Campaign
- ▶ **Local Art Plug:** \$3,151 for DIY Venue Scholarships
- ▶ **Mahzy Project:** \$3,638 for Benson Garden Bed Project
- ▶ **Miller Park Minne Lusa Community Garden:** \$2,500 for Community Garden Improvement Project
- ▶ **Montclair Trendwood Parkside Georgetowne Neighborhood Association:** \$5,000 for Playground
- ▶ **Near South Neighbors:** \$1,600 for Welcome to Spring Event
- ▶ **Prairie Lane Neighborhood Association:** \$2,170 for All-Access Neighborhood Pool Nights
- ▶ **Seventy Five North:** \$2,604 for Neighborhood Engagement & Inclusion Project
- ▶ **Sheltering Tree:** \$2,979 for Sustainable Gardening
- ▶ **Skylark/Cryer Neighborhood Association:** \$1,390 for Improving Neighborhood Communication
- ▶ **South Omaha Neighborhood Alliance:** \$5,000 for Quetzal Mural Project



"Involving community members in grant decisions ensures that funding is more aligned with the actual needs and priorities of the neighborhoods."

LIZ POTTER
2024 Committee Member



40% of total funding needs were met



Fundholders maximize the power of giving

Having a fund at the Omaha Community Foundation provides you with a dynamic tool to support causes you care about and meet community needs. Here's how you can contribute.

Give to the Community Interest Funds

Your contribution ensures vital resources reach local nonprofits and community organizations driving meaningful change. Support this work by donating to the Community Interest Funds at omahafoundation.org/donate/CIF.

Amplify the impact of grant recipients

The grants awarded are a fraction of what it takes to effectively run a nonprofit. By supporting grant recipients, you're contributing to their sustained success.

OPEN A FUND

A Donor Advised Fund is our most popular fund option. It is a charitable-giving account that allows individuals, families, or organizations to contribute, receive an immediate tax deduction, and support the charitable causes and nonprofit organizations of their choice over time. We offer expertise, guidance, and administrative support, simplifying the giving process. Learn more at omahafoundation.org/open.

Nonprofit grant opportunities

The Omaha Community Foundation serves as a vital resource and collaborator with local nonprofits, providing a diverse array of grant opportunities year-round. Grant applications are accepted annually during the following dates, closing at 11:59 p.m. on the last day of each application period.

JANUARY 1 - MARCH 1

These five resident-led grant programs are a part of our Community Interest Funds. Anyone can donate at omahafoundation.org/donate/CIF.

- ▶ **African American Unity Fund**
Focuses on arts and culture, basic human needs, community development, health and wellness, and capacity building.
- ▶ **Futuro Latino Fund**
Arts and culture, capacity building, community and economic development, civic engagement, health and wellness, youth, families, and women.
- ▶ **LGBTQIA2S+ Equality Fund**
Workforce development, healthcare accessibility, justice system involvement, public leadership, safe shelter, and homelessness prevention.
- ▶ **Refugee Community Grant Fund**
Family stabilization and youth support services, education and culture, physical and mental health, and fostering belonging and inclusion.
- ▶ **Omaha Neighborhood Grants**
Empowering local residents to lead initiatives and projects in their own neighborhoods, fostering active citizenship and community building in Omaha.

JANUARY 1 - FEBRUARY 5

- ▶ **Omaha Venture Group Grants**
Focuses on four areas: arts and culture; education and workforce; health; and civic engagement, neighborhoods, and safety.

JUNE 1 - JULY 15

Established by OCF donors, Field of Interest Funds support focus areas.

- ▶ **Creche Childhood Education Fund**
Early childhood education.
- ▶ **Jetton Charitable Fund**
Youth access to art, history, and natural sciences.
- ▶ **Richard A. Shaw Fund**
History, natural sciences, and outdoor education.

JULY 1 - AUGUST 1

- ▶ **Building Healthy Futures Fund**
For programs providing access to healthcare for Omaha Public Schools students and their families.
- ▶ **Fund for Omaha**
Advancing racial equity and social justice.



Omaha Community Foundation

Growing good,
together.

The Omaha Community Foundation strengthens our community by building connections between people, ideas, and funding.

By developing a deep knowledge of local needs and the nonprofit organizations that are working on solutions, the team at OCF has established itself as a valued resource and a catalyst for good.

THANK YOU

We extend our gratitude to the following organizations and individuals whose support made the 2024 Community Interest Funds possible.

- ▶ Conagra Brands Foundation
- ▶ Google Fiber
- ▶ Lozier Foundation
- ▶ Mutual of Omaha
- ▶ Peter Kiewit Foundation
- ▶ Sherwood Foundation

- ▶ Earl & Rose Berkey
- ▶ William & Rose Marie Davis
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- ▶ Tyler Horning
- ▶ Hong Huynh
- ▶ Dean Jacobson
- ▶ Troy John
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- ▶ Dr. Katie Weitz
- ▶ Liz White

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