

Grantmaking Priorities

Please review this information carefully before submitting your grant proposal.

The Blandin Foundation mission is to strengthen communities in rural Minnesota, especially the Grand Rapids area, with the vision of healthy rural communities grounded in strong economies where the burdens and benefits are widely shared.

The Blandin Foundation only accepts applications from qualifying Minnesota organizations. Eligible organizations:

- are located in Minnesota
- have Internal Revenue Service 501(c)3 status, or are a unit of government
- propose projects that align with Blandin Foundation's vision and mission and its six strategic focus areas.

Most grant resources – nearly 90 percent for 2009-2010 – will be made to projects and programs that address economic opportunity, educational attainment or fairness and opportunity. See the chart at the end of this document for more information.

All grant proposals should:

1. Define an issue and articulate a strategy related to one of the Blandin Foundation's strategic grant making priorities that will lead to meaningful action by the community. (Framing)
2. Actively include the perspectives of diverse members of the community that have a stake in the issue at hand. (Build social capital)
3. Demonstrate that your project or program has additional support (cash or in-kind) from sources other than Blandin Foundation which will help sustain the activity to its conclusion. (Mobilize resources)

Economic Opportunity

Technology and globalization are changing rural Minnesota. Natural resources remain the foundation of our economies, but the application of new technologies for bio-refining and other processes offer the prospect of expanded markets. In addition, the quality of place provided by rural communities can serve as the incubator for entirely new economic opportunities that are not tied to traditional natural resources. Blandin Foundation believes that people can work together for the common good and thus positively influence the economic future of their communities.

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In your grant proposal:

Show the significant, demonstrable and widely-shared economic impacts that will result from the project or program evidenced by one or more of the following indicators:

- Jobs created and retained.
- Pay levels for employees in enterprises benefiting from Blandin activities.
- New enterprises, products and markets developed
- Financial investment in economic assets leveraged by Blandin funds
- The community's natural and built environment are sustainably managed to optimize benefits for current and future generations.

Educational Attainment

As rural workforce growth rates decline and the world economy becomes increasingly competitive, it is essential that Minnesotans increase their educational attainment levels. This is particularly the case for populations that have been traditionally disadvantaged like minorities, immigrants, low income, and people with disabilities. Education policy experts estimate that Minnesota must increase the rate of students who finish some type of post-secondary education by 50 percent by the year 2020 to meet the demand for skilled workers needed to remain competitive in the world. Blandin Foundation believes supporting efforts to help people on their path to lifelong success results in individual success and economic strength for rural communities.

In your grant proposal:

Show how the project will address these indicators:

- Disadvantaged students benefiting from Blandin activities demonstrate improved educational outcomes from early childhood to post-secondary.
- Parents and community demonstrate evidence of increased commitment to creating strong educational culture.

Fairness and Opportunity

Blandin Foundation is committed to the idea that all people deserve to live with dignity in our society.

Fairness and opportunity grants are made primarily in the Blandin Foundation local giving area – Itasca County, Minnesota. Grant proposals should address root causes of social issues and inequities. Low priority is placed on large capital grants, recreation and community amenities.

In your grant proposal:

- Show how low-income or other disadvantaged people will be better able to live in dignity.

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- Demonstrate how disadvantaged and mainstream populations have greater ability to work together and are empowered to participate in community life.

Develop diverse leaders

For the past 25 years, the Blandin Foundation has, and will continue to make, a very large investment in leadership development through our internal Blandin Community Leadership Program (BCLP) to develop diverse leaders and provide them with the knowledge, skills and resources needed for collective action.

In addition to investment in BCLP, Blandin Foundation will fund a very limited number of grants that develop leaders in specialized sectors that are critical to the health of rural communities such as health care, education and news media.

In your grant proposal:

- identify the specific population to be served
- identify in what ways participants will be more involved in community life.
- explain the desired impacts that will result from this increased involvement.

Rural Voice

Blandin Foundation currently acts as a voice for rural Minnesota through its public policy initiatives.

In addition, Blandin Foundation awards grants to help rural residents be their own voice, through supporting new and existing avenues to express the rural perspective in local and statewide policy debates, particularly those that relate to economic opportunity and educational attainment.

In your grant proposal provide:

- Evidence of rural perspectives represented in public policy deliberations.
- Evidence of developing and supporting new and existing communication channels that give voice to rural perspectives.
- Actions taken by policy makers that can be at least in part attributed to rural voice activities of Blandin and/or partners.

Intercultural competency/inclusivity

Blandin Foundation believes that differences – and being able to work effectively across those differences – strengthen communities. When communities intentionally address issues from different perspectives and life experiences (whether gender, age, physical ability, race, or cultural background), they engage

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community members – and thus problem-solving skills -- from all walks of life, resulting in richer, more effective community-based resolutions.

Grants made in this focus area support work that increases the level of knowledge, behavior and skills needed to generate positive interactions that bridge cultural differences.

In your grant proposal provide:

- Evidence of changed behaviors relative to race, gender or other categories of difference.
- Increased rates of participation by diverse populations in mainstream activities and, conversely, increased participation by the mainstream in diverse activities.
- Community members speak knowledgeably about cultures other than their own that are present in the community.

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Grant Allocation by Strategy – 2009

Total grantmaking for 2009 estimated at approximately \$13.2 million.

