

# Maximizing County Endowment Fund Dollars:

*Questions to consider as you begin a new year*



FOR GOOD.  
FOR IOWA.  
FOR EVER.



*WOW! You read that right. This is the most money that has ever been allocated through the County Endowment Fund Program in its 15+ year history! Now is a great time to consider how you can maximize these dollars to best support your county and your community foundation. Please take some time to review these questions and consider changes you can make to your policies and process this year.*

## HOW CAN YOU STRENGTHEN YOUR GRANTMAKING POLICIES AND PROCESS?

- Refresh your grant guidelines. Grant guidelines help inform nonprofit applicants of your priorities and guides the development of their proposals. It is recommended that grant guidelines be as detailed as possible, while maintaining clarity and keeping guidelines concise. Page 3 of our [Guide to Effective Grantmaking](#) is a great resource!
- Revisit your rules. We often see the list of rules and restrictions of a grantmaking program increase over time. However, there are very few legal requirements that must be followed. You have an incredible opportunity to use these *flexible* CEFPP dollars to meet unmet needs in your community. Our [Do This, Not That](#) resource outlines what's required and what isn't and how to best support applicants.
- Set a grant minimum. Nonprofits invest considerable time into applications, reporting, and attending award ceremonies. Grant reviewers also invest time in reviewing applications and reports as well as planning and attending award ceremonies. Be mindful of the ROI for your grantees and yourselves.
- Remove grant maximums. The opportunities are endless with your grantmaking investments. An organization in your community may have a unique opportunity to leverage another grant that will impact your community for years to come. There may be a once in a lifetime community project for you to invest in. Don't let grant maximums prohibit you from making significant investments in projects that will meet needs in your communities.

## HOW WILL YOU USE YOUR UNRESTRICTED ENDOWMENT PAYOUT THIS YEAR?

Have a strategic conversation about your unrestricted endowment payout. You may choose:

- to invest in your operations to encourage fund development and future impact;
- to use it to supplement grantmaking or support community initiatives for an immediate impact;
- to invest it for future growth and impact; or
- a mixture of 2-3 of these strategies that best fit your county's needs.

## HOW CAN YOU LEVERAGE THESE FUNDS TO SUPPORT STAFFING CAPACITY?

You can utilize county endowment fund dollars in two ways to invest in staff capacity to support fund development in your county. Here's how:

- You can use your unrestricted endowment payout;
- You can utilize a self-grant (up to 5% of your annual CEFPP grantmaking funds); and/or
- You can leverage an [ICoF capacity building grant](#) (pre-applications available beginning September 15).

By investing in staff capacity now, your foundation will grow its assets to create greater impact for the future.

*Questions? We can help! Contact the Iowa Council of Foundations team at [info@iowacounciloffoundations.org](mailto:info@iowacounciloffoundations.org).*