



SOUTHERN MINNESOTA
INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

525 Florence Avenue • PO Box 695 • Owatonna, MN 55060-0695
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Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation FEAST! Smart Start Grant Program Guidelines and Procedures

Effective March 2018

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) is a regional development and philanthropic organization that fosters economic and community vitality in 20 counties of southern Minnesota through a culture of collaboration and partnership. We envision a prosperous and growing region with vibrant communities, innovative and successful economies, and engaged and valued citizens. To accomplish this we invest in early childhood, economic development, and community development initiatives.

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation is accepting applications from organizations to receive up to \$10,000 to implement FEAST! Smart Start in their community. Up to 4 applicants will receive a total of up to \$40,000 to support individual farm and food entrepreneurs through a defined, structured technical assistance and customized, transformational coaching process.

Strong food economies are dependent upon successful entrepreneurs. These individuals start and expand small scale farms, production and processing facilities, distribution hubs, and food transportation systems. This also includes small town grocers, local cafés and restaurants, caterers and food service businesses all of which specialize in including local foods on their shelves or menus.

Because these individuals who make up the food ecosystem are so important to the future of local food consumption and our agricultural economy, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation has created this special grant opportunity to build resources for creating a sustainable and resilient food economy for southern Minnesota. Business financing is important to success, but financing alone does not provide business leaders with the business acumen needed to develop and sell products and create jobs.

Using the designed FEAST! Smart Start toolbox as a guide to implementation, selected communities will have 12 months to launch key elements:

- An all-inclusive community conference
- Invitation and selection of up to five food/farm companies
- A two-day executive training for the five selected companies
- Six-month client/coaching training of up to 5 hours per month
- Creation of a peer network
- Assessment and evaluation





- Capture key learnings

Organizations requesting consideration will be asked to demonstrate the following:

- Strong interest in growing the food economy
- Ability to organize and implement this program with defined partnerships
- Additional funding support

Funding

- Grant awards will be made up to \$10,000
- Only one application per organization will be considered
- All projects must be completed within a 12-month timeframe
- All grants require a 100% match, at least 25% cash (cash match must be in-hand before grant funds are released)

Eligibility

To be eligible for a SMIF grant, organizations must meet the following requirements:

- Have Internal Revenue Service 501(c)3 status, are a unit/agency of government or a public school/institution.
- Located (or serve) within SMIF's 20-county region:

Blue Earth	Fillmore	Le Sueur	Olmsted	Wabasha
Brown	Freeborn	Martin	Rice	Waseca
Dodge	Goodhue	Mower	Sibley	Watsonwan
Faribault	Houston	Nicollet	Steele	Winona

Exclusions

Ineligible organizations or activities include:

- Individuals, businesses, or other for-profit organizations
- General operating expenses and expenses not directly related to the project/program
- Capital funding, fixed assets, campaigns or endowments
- Existing deficits
- Programs or services mandated by law
- Projects/programs already in progress or completed
- Funds for re-granting or to establish loan pools
- Strategic planning without tangible outcomes within the 12-month timeframe
- Feasibility studies without tangible outcomes within the 12-month timeframe
- Research projects or school-related internships
- Routine city, county, or township planning or zoning





Priority Considerations

SMIF will give priority consideration to applications which best demonstrate:

- Measurable results—projects that can show quantitative results in SMIF focus areas
- Asset-based approaches—projects that maximize the strengths, talents, and resources of the local community
- Collaboration/partnership—projects that work with other organizations in unique and effective ways
- Sustainability of local or other funding streams—projects that have solid plans for continuation outside of SMIF funding
- Leveraged funding—projects that access all available resources and maximize SMIF's investment
- Effectiveness—projects that effectively address an identified need and/or opportunity
- Impact—projects that demonstrate an overall impact within SMIF's region

Application Process

Grant Review and Award Process

SMIF awards grants on a competitive basis. Eligible applications that evidence the seven funding priorities noted above will be given a full review, which may include a site visit, by SMIF staff and/or SMIF Management Team members. Note: Site visits are intended to gain additional information about the organization and the proposal. The most successful site visits include all collaborative partners.

A review committee, made up of SMIF Management Team members and staff members, makes the final grant award decisions.

Grant award payment(s) will be made once all grant contract requirements are completed. SMIF requires all grantees to submit grant reports as outlined in the grant contract.

SMIF will provide a public announcement highlighting the project on behalf of the grant recipient.

Organizations selected will be required to attend an orientation session on Wednesday, June 20, 2018. Communities selected will be asked to attend quarterly check in sessions throughout the duration of the one year grant.

Proposal Components

- Completed application (available upon request)





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- SMIF Project Budget Worksheet (balanced; available upon request)
- Audited financials or filed tax forms if unaudited
- IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter (if nonprofit organization)
- Letter(s) of support from partner organization(s) other than the applicant organization and fiscal agent

Applications are due May 15, 2018. For grant award consideration, submit a completed application via email to jenniferh@smifoundation.org or postal mail to:

Grants Coordinator
Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation
PO Box 695
Owatonna, MN 55060

All applicants will be contacted via email or telephone to confirm receipt of their application. For questions regarding the application, call Jennifer Heien at 507-214-7040 or email at jenniferh@smifoundation.org. Incomplete grant applications will not be considered.

For further information or questions about the grant program, call Pam Bishop at 507-214-7013 or email at pamb@smifoundation.org.

Communities will be selected June 15, 2018 and will be asked to launch no later than July 1, 2018 with program completion by June 30, 2019.

SMIF is a member of the Minnesota Council of Foundations and adheres to the Council of Foundation's Statement of Principles and Practices. SMIF's annual report is available on-line at www.smifoundation.org

