CenterPoint® Energy

2024 CenterPoint Foundation Charitable Giving Guidelines
Please read all information before applying for a grant.

Who We Are

The CenterPoint Energy Foundation ("Foundation") strives to be a catalyst in our communities by leveraging everyday opportunities and resources to achieve extraordinary outcomes. That's why we invest in initiatives that not only improve our stakeholders' lives today, but also build a strong foundation for tomorrow. Our corporate giving focuses on fostering a high quality of life in the communities we serve.

CenterPoint Energy recognizes that our success – and the success of our neighbors – is inextricably linked to the vibrancy of our communities. We seek to improve the communities we serve by supporting programs encouraging community connections, improving the quality of life and promoting inclusion to help communities thrive. We recognize an educated and engaged community is critical to the future of our business and our communities. We are committed to ensuring all students have the opportunities and tools they need to succeed academically, explore potential careers and be equipped to enter the workforce.

Key Facts to Understand Before You Apply

The Foundation awards grants annually to eligible organizations in Indiana, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Ohio, and Texas, where our company has a business presence. A list of counties CenterPoint Energy serves is located in Appendix A attached to this document.

We will review proposals from eligible organizations where our company has a business presence during the grant cycles below. We encourage organizations to submit requests during the cycle that works best for their budget as **funds are available in each cycle.** Applications must be submitted by the deadline to be considered for funding.

2024 Grant Cycles:
- **Cycle 1**: January 15 – February 16, 2024 (cycle closes at 11:59 p.m. CST)
  - Grant decisions will be communicated by end of April 2024
- **Cycle 2**: June 24 – July 26, 2024 (cycle closes at 11:59 p.m. CST)
  - Grant decisions will be communicated by end of October 2024

Submitting Grant Applications

- All grants must be submitted via our online grants application system:
  https://forms.benevity.org/4c9c2d4b-a306-4236-a527-63a6ac64e53a

Due to the volume of grant applications we receive, each application is evaluated on a competitive basis as we strive to fund programs with strong impact and measurable outcomes within our funding priorities.

While CenterPoint Energy values our business relationships and takes tremendous pride in serving our communities, the Internal Revenue Service stipulates that the Foundation may not consider business relationships when making grant-award decisions to avoid self-dealing practices.

Any changes to the application process will be posted on www.centerpointenergy.com/foundation.

Funding Priorities

Our funding targets innovative, effective and measurable programs enhancing the quality of life within our communities and support the following giving pillars: **Community Vitality and Education.** Priority consideration is given to programs serving low- to moderate income populations. Key focus areas within the giving pillars include:

Community Vitality
- *Affordable Housing* – Initiatives leading to increased access to quality, affordable and energy-efficient housing
- *Environment* – Energy Efficiency and conservation efforts as well as environmental education programs
- *Thriving Communities* – Quality of Place and resident-led initiatives leading to vibrant neighborhoods

Education
- *Literacy* – Literacy and tutoring programs focused on early childhood through adult learners
- *STEM Programs* – STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) education programs targeted to under-resourced areas; Digital device access
- *Workforce Development* – Programs addressing needs of our communities; credentialing programs providing skills for living wage jobs

Foundation Charitable Giving Programs

The Community Relations staff administers the following *primary* charitable programs, which are detailed below. If approved for funding, all payments will be made electronically as outlined in more detail in one of the *Frequently Asked Questions*.

- **Foundation Grant**
  This grant application is open to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations meeting the eligibility requirements as outlined on the next page. Organizations must be located within our corporate footprint and carry out programs related directly to our funding priorities, mission and vision. Applicants should expect a waiting period of at least 90 days from submission to final decision making.

- **Easy Match**
  Easy Match (the company's matching gifts program) furthers CenterPoint Energy's charitable giving by matching employees' personal donations dollar-for-dollar to eligible 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations.

- **Volunteer Rewards**
  The Volunteer Rewards program provides employees rewards for logging volunteer hours and can be donated to eligible 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations.

- **Board Service Grants**
  The Board Service Grant program provides a grant to an eligible 501(c)(3) non-profit organization for employee board service.

To be considered for grant funding, organizations must:

- Be a nonprofit organization and have obtained recognition of tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) as a public charity under Code 509(a) and in good standing. (If an organization is exempt under Section 509(a)(3), it must be Type I or Type II.)

- Have their organization's primary address located within CenterPoint Energy's footprint.

What we look for in an applicant organization:

- Financial stability

- Mission closely related to the Foundation's priorities

- Strong leadership and governance

- Reflective of the community being served (engaging clients in development, implementation and/or evaluation of programs)

When reviewing proposals, preference is given to funding opportunities/initiatives that:

- Fit closely with the Foundation's funding priorities

- Address community needs related to our funding priorities

- Include financial commitments from a variety of sources

- Utilize an effective evaluation plan specific to the proposed funding opportunity/initiative

- Demonstrate measurable and sustainable goals and outcomes

Restrictions

The CenterPoint Energy Foundation does not provide grant funding for the items or organizations listed below.

Please note, this is not an exhaustive listing and additional restrictions may also apply.

School clubs/organizations, including, but not limited to bands, athletic or academic teams, booster clubs, PTO/PTA	Organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, or religion
Meals, tickets, dues, memberships, fees, travel, tuition, subscriptions, and other tangible benefits	Political, labor, military, international or fraternal organizations
Childcare fees/subsidies or K-12 tuition	Programs administered by religious organizations for religious purposes
Sponsorships, fundraisers, races, telethons, marathons, benefits, banquets, galas, golf tournaments, festivals, or other events	Debt retirement or funding of any activity that is already completed
Individuals	Contests, competitions, athletics, pageants, or talent contests
Scholarly or medical research	A 509(a)(3) Type III supporting organization charity
Endowments or scholarships	Previous grantees who have not submitted required reporting

Frequently Asked Questions

Please review the questions below for more information before starting an application.

1. **Q: Are there deadlines for applying?**

   A: Yes. The deadlines for 2024 are below:
   - **Cycle 1**: January 15 – February 16, 2024 (cycle closes at 11:59 p.m. CST)
     - Grant decisions will be communicated by end of April 2024
   - **Cycle 2**: June 24 – July 26, 2024 (cycle closes at 11:590 p.m. CST)
     - Grant decisions will be communicated by end of October 2024

   Please see www.centerpointenergy.com/foundation or contact the Foundation at CNPGives@centerpointenergy.com for additional questions.

   Please avoid waiting until the day of to submit, as we cannot help with technical issues related to the grant management software. Note that the turnaround time for answers to questions is typically 24-48 hours.

2. **Q: Does my organization have to be located in an area served by CenterPoint Energy to receive a grant?**

   A: Foundation Grants are limited to organizations that have their primary address located in a community CenterPoint Energy serves. Consideration may be given to organizations who serve communities within CenterPoint Energy territory but are located outside of it. Please email CNPGives@centerpointenergy.com if this applies to your organization. A list of counties CenterPoint Energy serves is in Appendix A attached to this document.

3. **Q: Are nonprofits required to have a 501(c)(3) designation to apply?**

   A: Nonprofits applying for a Foundation grant must be tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) and recognized as a public charity under Code Section 509(a) and in good standing. (If an organization is exempt under Section 509(a)(3), it must be Type I or Type II.)

4. **Q: My organization is a current grantee. Are we eligible to apply for additional funding?**

   A: If your organization has been awarded a grant within the last 12 months, additional requests for the same funding will not be considered until a final report has been submitted.

5. **Q: Can I apply for multiple grants within the same calendar year or time period?**

   A: Yes, however, please note that due to the volume of requests received, we will take into consideration all commitments made per organization into our overall decision.

6. **Q: Does the Foundation provide funding to daycare or childcare centers to subsidize the cost of tuition, fees, or other childcare related costs?**

   A: Unfortunately, families across our footprint are facing rising childcare costs. Due to limited resources and a desire to remain fair and equitable, we are unable to fund tuition assistance programs or other childcare related costs.

7. **Q: Do you fund salaries and/or general operating expenditures?**

   A: At this time, the Foundation is not accepting applications for general operating expenditures. We will not consider requests for salaries, fringe benefits, and overhead on a standalone basis. The most competitive grant applications will be capital or programmatic in nature. Please email us at CNPGives@centerpointenergy.com if you have further questions.

8. **Q: What is the difference between a Foundation grant and an event sponsorship?**

   A: Foundation grants are provided to IRS designated 501 (c)(3) non-profit organizations. Grants are charitable donations used to fund program costs, and initiatives large in scope and impact, and other programmatic activities undertaken by nonprofit organizations.

   Sponsorships are monetary contributions given in support of events or activities in exchange for advertising and/or publicity. These decisions are made at a regional level.

9. **Q: May we submit more than one application at a time?**

   A: Yes. Priority will be given to the initial application. If a grant is awarded to an organization, existing funding will be considered when evaluating any additional application within the same grant cycle/calendar year.

10. **Q: What is the process for applying for a grant?**

    A: The Foundation grant application is open to nonprofit organizations located within our corporate footprint and seeking to carry out programs related directly to our funding priorities, mission, and vision. All applicants must submit their application via our online grant portal to be considered for funding. Applicants should expect a waiting period of a minimum of 90 days from submission to final decision making.

11. **Q: How do I apply?**
    A: Applications must be submitted online through the CenterPoint Energy website. Proposals are not accepted via email, postal mail, or fax.

12. **Q: When does the Foundation board meet?**

    A: The Foundation board meets after the end of each cycle to make decisions on grant applications.

13. **Q: What is an appropriate request amount for a Foundation grant?**

    A: The amount requested from the Foundation should be proportionate to your program goals, funding opportunity budget and expected income from other sources. Funding is ultimately contingent upon the initiative's alignment with the Foundation's priorities and funding availability from the Foundation's annual budget. Typically we look for programs and projects having a variety of additional funding sources.

14. **Q: What e-mail address should be used for the primary contact?**

    A: When applying for a grant, please ensure the appropriate individual has access to the application. You may want to consider using a generic email address (grants@nonprofit.org or info@nonprofit.org) to ensure continuity of access in the event of staff turnover. Impact reports and communication regarding grants will be emailed to the submitter, and future funding will be contingent on successful completion of all reports.

Please make sure you add CNPGives@centerpointenergy.com to your safe senders/contacts list to ensure you receive communication from the Foundation regarding your application.

Applications will also ask for a finance contact to facilitate payment should your grant be funded. This email cannot be changed for short-term absences such as vacation and will be notified via email from our payment vendor bill.com 3 days prior to payments being released. In the event no one responds to the email, a paper check will be mailed to the address on record that is associated with your grant proposal.

If you are using a fiscal agent to receive payments, please make sure this information is accurate.

Organizations can edit/add/delete contacts to their profile to ensure contact information is up to date.

15. **Q: I have questions about accessing my application or impact report.**

    A: We do not have access to any account information. Please contact Benevity directly at grantsupport@benevity.com .

16. **Q: I can't find my last application.**

    A: Please refer back to the links in your emails from your submitted application.

17. **Q: Can I copy and paste information from a Word document into one of the application's text boxes?**

    A: Yes. The application consists of text and number fields. You can copy information from an existing document and paste into the appropriate text box in the application. You will also be able to upload attachments to the application. **However, please copy as plain text to avoid errors related to character limits.**

18. **Q: I do not have all the required documents in an electronic format. How do I submit them?**

    A: All documentation is required to be submitted in an electronic format with the application. Please scan the documents to create a PDF of your documents and attach them to your application.

19. **Q: What is required of my organization if approved for funding?**

    A: All grant applications that are approved for funding will require the following:

    • Signed Grant Agreement

    • Payment will be made electronically via a third-party vendor (bill.com)

    • Grant Reporting – an annual impact report will be required to be submitted electronically through your online account and is due within 30 days after the grant period is over.

    Note: We have made some enhancements to our online grant applications with greater emphasis on measurable outcomes. These requirements are to be submitted in a timely manner. Overdue requirements can affect scheduled payments as well as future funding.

20. **Q: In what form of communication will you notify my organization about our application?**

    A: Communications during the application process will be made primarily by email. Please add this email address (CNPGives@CenterPointEnergy.com) to your contacts to receive all communications during the application process**.**

21. **Q: How do I calculate the living wage for my community?**

    A: Please visit the following website as a resource: https://livingwage.mit.edu/

22. **Q: What are some additional resources that I should consider if my organization/program may not be a good fit for the CNP Foundation?**

    A: The following resources may be helpful:

    • Foundation Center – Find Funding – www.foundationcenter.org
    • Grants Alert – www.grantsalert.com
    • Chronicle of Philanthropy – www.philanthropy.com/grants

23. **Q: What are tips for a complete application submission**

    A: Here are a few tips for a complete application submission

    • Make sure you review each of the 2 funding priorities and measurable outcomes prior to starting a new application. This will help you to determine which funding priority best fits your project or initiative.

    • Please read each question carefully to ensure all points are addressed.

    • Make sure you upload your 501c3 exemption document and not your sales tax exemption document.

    • If you have computer trouble, try the following steps – clear your cache, shut down your browser and reopen, try a different browser, and try to log in again.

    • We suggest creating a group for your account so more than one person has access in case you have someone leave your organization.

For additional questions about the Foundation, giving priorities or giving cycles, please e-mail CNPGives@centerpointenergy.com.

Appendix A
List of Counties by State CenterPoint Energy Foundation Serves
(*as of November 2023*)

Indiana Counties		
Bartholomew	Huntington	Shelby
Blackford	Jay	Spencer
Boone	Jefferson	Tippecanoe
Clark	Johnson	Tipton
Clay	Knox	Vanderburgh
Clinton	Lawrence	Vermillion
Daviess	Madison	Vigo
Decatur	Martin	Wabash
Delaware	Monroe	Warren
Floyd	Montgomery	Warrick
Fountain	Morgan	Wayne
Gibson	Parke	
Grant	Pike	
Hamilton	Posey	
Hancock	Putnam	
Hendricks	Randolph	
Henry	Rush	

Louisiana Counties		
Acadia	Iberia	St Tammany
Allen	Jefferson Davis	Tangipahoa
Avoyelles	Lafayette	Union
Beauregard	LaSalle	Vermillion
Bienville	Lincoln	Vernon
Bossier	Madison	Washington
Caddo	Ouachita	Webster
Calcasieu	Rapides	
Cameron	Richland	
Claiborne	St Landry	
DeSoto	St Martin	
Evangeline	St Mary	

Minnesota Counties		
Anoka	Morrison	Todd
Blue Earth	Nicollet	Waseca
Brown	Pipestone	Washington
Carver	Pope	Watonwan
Crow Wing	Ramsey*	Wright
Dakota	Renville	
Douglas	Rice	
Faribault	Rock	
Hennepin	Scott	
Isanti	Sherburne	
Kandiyohi	Sibley	
Le Sueur	Stearns	
Mcleod	Steele	
Meeker	Stevens	
Mille Lacs	Swift	

* *Please note, we do not serve the City of Saint Paul*

Mississippi Counties		
Bolivar	Jefferson Davis	Perry
Chickasaw	Jones	Pike
Clarke	Lafayette	Quitman
Copiah	Lamar	Rankin
Covington	Lawrence	Scott
Forrest	Leake	Simpson
George	Lincoln	Smith
Greene	Madison	Stone
Hancock	Marion	Sunflower
Harrison	Neshoba	Tallahatchie
Hinds	Newton	Warren
Jackson	Panola	Yalobusha
Jasper	Pearl River	

Ohio Counties		
Auglaize	Greene	Pickaway
Champaign	Highland	Preble
Clark	Logan	Shelby
Clinton	Madison	Warren
Darke	Miami	
Fayette	Montgomery	

Texas Counties		
Anderson	Gregg	Orange
Angelina	Guadalupe	Panola
Aransas	Hardin	Polk
Atascosa	Harris	Refugio
Austin	Harrison	Rusk
Bastrop	Hays	San Augustine
Bee	Hopkins	San Jacinto
Bexar	Houston	San Patricio
Bowie	Jackson	Shelby
Brazoria	Jasper	Smith
Caldwell	Jefferson	Titus
Calhoun	Jim Hogg	Trinity
Camp	Jim Wells	Tyler
Cass	Karnes	Upshur
Chambers	Kleberg	Van Zandt
Cherokee	Lavaca	Victoria
Colorado	Lee	Walker
Comal	Liberty	Waller
DeWitt	Madison	Webb
Duval	Marion	Wharton
Fayette	Matagorda	Wilson
Fort Bend	Medina	Wood
Franklin	Montgomery	
Galveston	Morris	
Goliad	Nacogdoches	
	Nueces	