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Contact Us
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I. HIGHLIGHTS

Program Description

The Community Assistance Fund (CAF) is levied by the Missoula Board of County Commissioners to provide human services and establish a safety net or continuum of services to meet basic human needs in Missoula County. Projects awarded funding through the Community Assistance Fund serve at-risk populations at the most basic levels of food, shelter, medical services, and emergency transportation.

At-risk populations are broadly described as groups of persons who experience temporary or permanent situations that interfere with their ability to access or receive assistance to meet their basic human needs. Such at-risk populations may include but are not limited to:

- Children
- Older adults
- Persons with disabilities
- Persons who live in an institutional or group center setting
- Persons with chronic conditions
- Persons who are economically disadvantaged
- Persons with substance use dependency
- Persons experiencing homelessness
- Persons with limited access to transportation

Eligibility

Eligible entities are 501(c)3 not-for-profit health and human service organizations or governmental agencies that provide basic needs assistance to at-risk populations in Missoula County.

Project Period

The project period begins July 1, 2025, and ends June 30, 2026. Funds may not be expended or obligated prior to July 1, 2025.

Funding

The total amount available in the Community Assistance Fund is unknown at this time. It is the purview of the Board of County Commissioners to determine the total amount, if any, to be available for funding. The availability of Community Assistance Funds for fiscal year 2026 is not guaranteed.

Matching funds

No matching funds are required.

Application Deadline

The deadline for submission of a complete application is 5 p.m. on Friday, May 9, 2025.



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II. SUBMISSION PROCESS

ONLINE GRANT PORTAL

Applicants seeking Community Assistance Fund grant monies will submit their applications using an online platform. This grant portal system requires that prospective applicants create an account in order to access and submit their application. Here are the steps:

Create an account in the Missoula County Grant Portal.

- Try to do this as soon as possible to allow time to get yourself familiar with the system.
- The link to the grant portal is <http://missoula.co/grantportal>.
- The next page shows what the landing page looks like. Note the grey “Create New Account” button in the lower left-hand corner.
- NOTE: If you already have an account, click on the blue “Log On” button and proceed.

Missoula
COUNTY

Logon

Email Address*

Password*

Log On Create New Account

Welcome to the Missoula County Grant Portal.

New Users: Please click on "Create New Account" to complete the registration process and create your logon credentials.

Existing Users: Please enter your credentials and log in. If you forgot your password, please use the "Forgot your Password?" link to the left to reset your password.

Watch the training video and materials about the online system.

- There is a training video available and information to help understand how to create an account and navigate through an application.
- It is strongly recommended that you invest a few minutes of your time to watch the video and get acquainted with how to navigate through the online system.
- Those resources can be found here <https://support.foundant.com/hc/en-us/articles/4479853059991>
- **NOTE:** The training sections are generic about the grant portal features and navigating the system. They are not specific to the CAF grant application. However, your experience in applying for the CAF grant will be much better if you are comfortable with moving around in the system.



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Accessing your application.

- Once you have created an account, you will use the grant portal page every time to get into your application to continue working on it and ultimately submit the application.
- The grant portal is where you will also submit your quarterly reports.
- Note the blue “Log On” button in the lower left-hand corner of the page.
- You might consider bookmarking the grant portal page for ease of access.

III. APPLICATION COMPONENTS

The following components comprise a complete application package: (A) Project Overview, (B) Project Narrative, (C) Workplan, (D) Budget Detail Worksheet, (E) Budget Narrative, and (F) Attachments.

Please read the instructions and guidelines in this NOFA and throughout the online system. Pay attention to the points associated with each component. The review committee scores applications based on these points and how well the applicant answers the questions.

NOTE: Completeness and accuracy of application, as well as grantees past performance, will be taken into consideration by the review committee (e.g., missed reporting deadlines, poor quality Financial or Progress Reports).

(A) PROJECT OVERVIEW [No points](#)

This section gathers information about the project/program for which CAF grant funds are being requested. Online fields include:

- **Project Title** (125 characters): Program/project title that is succinct and to the point.
- **Project Synopsis** (400 characters): Brief summary of how CAF grant funds will be used and for what purpose.
- **Basic Need** (radio button): Per the intent of the Community Assistance Fund, select one basic need to be addressed (food, shelter, medical services, or emergency transportation).
- **Amount Requested**: How much is the applicant requesting as a CAF grant? No decimals.
- **Board of Directors Approval**: Date the applicant’s Board of Directors approved the submission of the application.

(B) PROJECT NARRATIVE [60 points total \(Each sub-section has its own points\)](#)

The Project Narrative section is where you provide a narrative description of the program or project for which you are requesting county funding. There are seven sections to be completed.



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1. Executive Summary (5 points) *3,000 character limit with spaces*

Summarize the program or project for which you are seeking funds. State the problem or need. Identify the human service need (food, shelter, medical services, or emergency transportation) that your project will meet. Describe specific action items and outcomes. Be clear who will be implementing the project. Be clear who the beneficiaries are. Be clear about what is to be accomplished. Include the amount of CAF funds you are requesting. Be concise but make sure the content can stand on its own if it were to be separated from the rest of the application.

2. Basic Need (10 points) *4,000 character limit with spaces*

Identify the problem(s) to be addressed. Make a compelling case for the need for your project based upon the purpose of the Community Assistance Fund. Describe how the project fits into the mission and goals of your organization. Cite current and local statistics to support your request for funding. Explain why your program or project is important and necessary. Be very clear about the population your project will serve and how your project meets the specific needs of that population.

3. Project Design (15 points) *5,000 character limit with spaces*

Describe what you plan to do, how you plan to do it, and why. Explain the basis for your project and how you determined that your approach would be successful (e.g., best practices, evidence-based). Address how your services are coordinated with other agencies in the community and describe how the services are not duplicative of one another.

This section is worth 15 points, indicating the value associated with showing the reviewers that you have thoroughly vetted the idea of the project and thoughtfully determined what it will take to accomplish its purpose. Later in the application, you will support your proposal with a budget which should reflect your project design, goals, objectives, and implementation plan.

- If this is a new project, ensure that what you are proposing to do and that the number of clients to be served are realistic and can be achieved.
- If this is a continuation project (one for which your agency is currently receiving Community Assistance Funds), describe what has been accomplished and number of clients served since July 1, 2024 and what improvements to the project you are planning and why.
- Driving point: How will a grant from the Community Assistance Fund improve the outcomes of persons who live in the city of Missoula and throughout Missoula County?



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4. Residents served outside city limits (5 points) *1,500 character limit with spaces*
Will your proposed project physically serve county residents located outside the city limits? If so, how this will occur? An example is providing housing workshops on-site in the Seeley-Swan Valley or direct delivery of food to residents in Lolo. Be specific. Stating that persons who are county residents come to your location within the city for services is not sufficient to receive points.

5. Program Evaluation (5 points) *1,500 character limit with spaces*
In what ways does your organization engage with individuals who have used your services? How does this inform program changes? Be specific and provide examples.

6. Assessment (10 points) *4,000 character limit with spaces*
Describe how you plan to assess your progress in meeting your goals and objectives. You will be expected to report quarterly with quantitative responses on progress made toward your objectives in addition to a narrative description of accomplishments and challenges.

What specific data will you collect and how will you collect it? How will analysis of that data show progress, success, and areas for improvement? How will you ensure the funds are being maximized and meeting the purpose for which they are intended? What methods will you utilize to determine if your services improved the outcomes intended for those you serve (e.g., client interviews, pre/post surveys).

7. Capacity (10 points) *4,000 character limit with spaces*
Describe the agency's capacity for successfully implementing the proposed project. Why is your agency best suited for this endeavor? Describe the experience and expertise of specific staff who will be responsible for implementing the project for which funding is requested. Does your proposal leverage additional agency or other community resources? What other financial or in-kind resources are you using to provide basic human services to at-risk populations?

(C) WORKPLAN 20 points

The Workplan is comprised of Goals, Objectives, and Implementation activities that your agency will follow to accomplish the program or project for which you are seeking county funds.

- There are two separate Goal sections in the online system. You are required to complete at least one. **If you do not have a second goal, leave those sections blank.**
- Plan ahead. The Workplan is a major component to your application and is scored accordingly. Put thought and time into this.



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- Outline/Structure of online layout of fields:
 - Maximum # of goals is 2.
 - Within *each* goal, there is a maximum # of 3 objectives.
 - And, within each of the objectives, you are limited to 4 rows to describe the specific steps for implementing the objective.
- **NOTE:** If you are a successful candidate and are awarded funding, **you will report on each of the goals and objectives within four quarterly Progress Reports** throughout the contract period which is the fiscal year, July through June.

IMPORTANT GUIDANCE FOR THE WORKPLAN

A **GOAL** is a statement that conveys the project's intent – *with Community Assistance Fund monies* – to change, reduce, or eliminate the problem(s) described in the Basic Needs section. Goals are clear, achievable, realistic, tangible, and succinct. **One sentence.** (250 characters)

An **OBJECTIVE** is a specific milestone that is **measurable, realistic, and time-bound**. Objectives start with the word "To." You **must** include a number that is quantifiable and NOT a general percentage. (125 characters)

- For example, "To provide 300 blankets to the Hettinger Homeless Center" or "To provide 16 sewing classes to residents of the Moms with Toddlers Shelter."
- Example of an unacceptable objective statement: "Reach 80% of the youth who play basketball."

The **IMPLEMENTATION** table is where you include the action steps/activities that will take place to accomplish the objective and indicate the person responsible for ensuring it happens. Show the quarter within the fiscal year during which the activity will take place (**Q1**=July, August, September; **Q2**=October, November, December; **Q3**=January, February, March; **Q4**=April, May, June). (250 characters per cell in the table)

(D) **BUDGET DETAIL WORKSHEET** 5 points

You will download an Excel file to complete and then upload to the system.

- Click on the "BUDGET DETAIL WORKSHEET" [link](#) and save the Excel template file to your computer.
- Save the file with a preferred filename structure that includes your agency's name and FY26 in the filename of the saved worksheet.
- Here's an example of a preferred filename structure:
Fruit-N-Kids_FY26.CAF.Budget.Worksheet.xlsx
- Upload the file using the "Upload a file" button within the application located in the grant portal.



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This Excel worksheet is where you provide revenue sources and program costs. Program costs are direct costs associated with delivering the services for the proposed program.

- Include only direct costs for accomplishing this program.
- Administrative fees and general overhead/indirect costs are not eligible expenses.
- Look at the second tab at the bottom of the worksheet for guidance on Allowable-Unallowable expenses.
- Commas are acceptable. No decimals.
- Detailed calculations showing how each project cost is associated with the county funding request must be explained in the Budget Narrative section.

NOTE: The Budget Detail Worksheet is the basis for requests for reimbursement of expenditures which you will submit each quarter throughout the fiscal year.

(E) BUDGET NARRATIVE 15 points

The Budget Narrative explains in detail how you arrived at the project costs for which you are seeking CAF grant funding. This section is worth 15 points which represents the time, effort, thought, and accuracy of what you are including. **NOTE:** *It is highly recommended you develop the Budget Narrative before you complete the Budget Detail Worksheet.*

What you'll be including in the Budget Narrative:

- **How the costs were derived.** In other words, show the calculations step by step and the specific figures used to arrive at the final cost for each budget line item.
- **A brief written description** that explains how the funding request will accomplish the goals and objectives of the program for each cost area. See this as another opportunity to educate the reviewer about your project. It is also another means to convince the reviewer that you have invested time into how your agency will use county taxpayer dollars wisely.
- **NOTE:** The Project Costs included in the Budget Narrative are for **Community Assistance Funds only.**
- **The bottom line is that you need to show, in detail, how you arrived at the project costs.** Do not make the reviewer try and figure out where you got the numbers and how they pertain to your program or project.

Below is one example of the type of information and layout you will be expected to provide for each budget line item. Examples of the information to include are shown in the online grant application for each project cost. Review those as soon as possible so you know what information you will need to gather and calculate.



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Salaries & Wages Narrative

Position title: Program Manager

Position FTE and equivalent hours: 1 FTE (equal to 2080 hours per year)

Hourly wage: \$20.00 per hour

FTE portion supported by CAF: .25 FTE (equal to 520 hours per year)

Amount of CAF funding for position: \$10,400 (\$20 per hour x 520 hours)

Narrative: The program manager for Fruit-N-Kids oversees a variety of projects that benefit the community. Multiple revenue sources support the manager's position. For the CAF funded project, .25 FTE is needed to conduct outreach to generate volunteers to drive to pick up the fruit and distribute it to the elementary school, to work with the school administration for fruit distribution, and to submit the quarterly reports required by the funder.

(F) ATTACHMENTS (No points)

1. **Organizational Chart.**
2. **Board of Directors list** printed on agency letterhead with each director's name, title, and period of service.
3. **Certificate of insurance** with the following included per Missoula County policy:
 - a. Minimum \$1 million per occurrence,
 - b. Minimum \$2 million in the aggregate for general liability coverage plus workers compensation as required by state law,
 - c. If automobiles are used in carrying out the service provided under contract, \$500,000 in auto liability is required,
 - d. Missoula County as an Additional Insured
 - e. Missoula County as a Certificate Holder (address to use: Missoula County; 200 W. Broadway; Missoula, MT 59802)

IV. APPLICATION REVIEW and AWARD PROCESS

Applications will be reviewed through a competitive process for completeness and responsiveness addressing the purpose of the Community Assistance Fund and other requirements as set forth in this Notice of Funding Availability. The review committee is comprised of one county commissioner, community members at-large, and is staffed by a county grants administrator.

In June 2025, county administrators will receive the preliminary recommendations for funding proposed by the review committee. During this period, adjustments to those recommendations may occur, depending upon the anticipated fiscal year budget. Applicants may be requested to submit revisions to their original application and budget. Final adoption of



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Missoula County's fiscal year budget typically occurs in early September after which the process for finalizing FY26 contracts with Community Assistance Fund grant awardees will begin. The contract period will be retroactive to July 1, 2025.

Tentative Timeline

The following is a preliminary timeline of activities associated with the submission, review, and award process for the Missoula County Community Assistance Fund program.

Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) release date	April 1, 2025
Application deadline	5 p.m. May 9, 2025
Staff compilation of applications	May 12-14, 2025
Citizen's review committee reads, evaluates, and scores applications, leading to preliminary grant funding recommendations to Board of County Commissioners for consideration during development of fiscal year 2026 budget	May & June 2025
County staff notifies applicants of tentative CAF award amounts. <i>Applicants may be requested to submit revisions.</i>	July 2025
Board of County Commissioners approves final fiscal year 2026 Missoula County budget, including Community Assistance Fund.	September 2025
Staff notifies applicants of final award and FY26 contracting process begins.	September 2025

NOTE: *The Board of County Commissioners reserves the right to award funds to projects they believe are the best use of the Community Assistance Funds for the benefit of the community, regardless of an applicant's score.*