



## IMPACT, IGNITE, & INSPIRE Grant Guidelines

### Overview

Impact Central Illinois is a collective giving organization for women looking to educate and transform themselves and our community through philanthropy. We combine the annual donations of our membership into transformational grants that are awarded to local nonprofits.

The Impact Central Illinois funding cycle runs from July 1st of one calendar year through June 30th of the following calendar year. In each funding cycle, we collect member contributions through November and, in mid-December, announce the amount of grant funds we will award at our annual meeting in June.

From January through May, Impact Central Illinois members who choose to be involved on a Grant Review Committee (GRC) review grant proposals and select the two strongest finalists from their respective committee. These finalists present to the entire Impact Central Illinois membership at our Annual Meeting in June, where all members vote and choose the grant recipients.

Impact Central Illinois offers three grant categories.

**IMPACT Grant:** Reserved for nonprofits with total revenue greater than \$1,500,000 in the previous fiscal year. These grants are evaluated in one of two focus areas: Community Wellness & Stability and Education & Opportunity. Our goal is to award two \$120,000 IMPACT Grants annually, one in each of the two focus areas.

**IGNITE Grant:** Reserved for nonprofits with total revenue between \$300,000 and \$1,500,000 in the previous fiscal year. Our goal is to award one \$80,000 IGNITE Grant annually.

**INSPIRE Grant:** Reserved for nonprofits with total revenue less than \$300,000 in the previous fiscal year. Our goal is to award one \$30,000 INSPIRE Grant annually.

Specific grant amounts in any given funding year are based on our membership and are announced in mid-December.

### Grant Eligibility

As part of our grant application process, **all** nonprofits need to provide:

- An IRS 501(c)(3) status approval letter and have held 501(c)(3) classification for a minimum of three years
- A CO-1 registration form (required to register a charity with the Illinois Attorney General's office) or Proof of Good Standing (from IL Secretary of State)
- The last three fiscal years of 990 tax filings.

**Note:** If your organization is not required to file a 990 with the IRS, and they have not done so voluntarily, then we require them to complete the ICI Financial Review template, which captures information from their Statements of Activity and Balance Sheets from the prior 3 years. The treasurer or president must sign the template

affirming that the data is true and accurate. 990 EZ, 990-N or 990-PF are not accepted.

- Most recent audit by an independent CPA, if an audit is required

All applicants must:

- Outline a proposed project/program that supports social outreach and/or charitable service, which benefits the community at large
- Provide services in Peoria, Tazewell, and/or Woodford counties, Illinois.
- Detail use of the full amount of the grant with a budget, using the budget template available to download:  
[https://www.impactcentralillinois.org/docs/2026\\_ICI\\_Proposal\\_Budget.xlsx](https://www.impactcentralillinois.org/docs/2026_ICI_Proposal_Budget.xlsx)
- Expend the awarded grant funds within a 24-month time period. Any unused grant funds will be forfeited after 24 months.

Other stipulations:

- An organization that has received any Impact Central Illinois grant may not reapply in the following two years, ie, two full grant cycles.
- Collaborations among two or more nonprofits must identify one lead organization to submit the grant application. The leading nonprofit must demonstrate a significant role in the execution of the program and is responsible for the submission of all required documentation, including all financial documentation.

### **Key Criteria for Grant Review**

Impact Central Illinois desires to fund programs or projects proposed by **Highly Capable** organizations to address **Measurable Needs** within our community with **Innovative Solutions**. These three key criteria will be used to guide discussion during all grant reviews. All proposal questions are aligned to one of these three key criteria.

### **IMPACT Grant Focus Areas**

Impact Central Illinois will accept IMPACT grant proposals in the following two focus areas. All IMPACT grant applicants must select one appropriate focus area when submitting their proposal. IGNITE and INSPIRE grant proposals are not split into focus areas for review.

**Community Wellness & Stability:** Empowering the health, stability, and basic needs of our community. This category supports projects that foster individual and community well-being by addressing:

- Mental & physical health
- Addiction recovery & therapeutic support
- Healthcare access & advocacy
- Environmental, public health, & animal welfare
- Recreational opportunities & public safety
- Affordable housing

- Homelessness & eviction prevention
- Domestic violence, foster care, and crisis intervention
- Hunger relief & food security
- Recidivism prevention and support

**Education & Opportunity:** Investing in the potential of individuals through education, development, and community connection. This category supports projects that help people learn, grow, and lead by addressing:

- Early childhood development & childcare
- K–12 and postsecondary educational outcomes
- Youth development
- Career readiness & job training
- Civic engagement & community leadership
- Cultural & arts advancement

### **Five Phase Funnel Review Process**

Impact Central Illinois utilizes the following Five Phase Funnel grant review process for all of our IMPACT, IGNITE, and INSPIRE Grants.

**Phase 1 - Financial Review:** All interested organizations must submit the required financial documents outlined in the grant guidelines for review by Impact Central Illinois' Financial Review Committee (FRC) by the deadline communicated on the grant timeline. ICI's FRC evaluates the financial integrity and compliance of all organizations before any proposal submission. Organizations demonstrating financial integrity will be sent an invitation along with a link to submit proposals and budgets to be considered and reviewed by the Grant Review Committees (GRCs).

**Phase 2 & Phase 3 - Proposal Reviews -** All approved organizations from Phase 1 are invited to submit a grant proposal along with a completed Program/Project Budget by the proposal deadline communicated on the grants timeline. Impact Central Illinois' GRC members evaluate proposals through two separate reviews and invite three organizations forward to Phase 4 - Site Visit.

**Phase 4 - Site Visit:** Impact Central Illinois GRC members conduct on-site visits to organizations that advance to this phase. Site visits center around a discussion between representatives from the organization and members of the GRCs and include a site tour if applicable. The Executive Director and/or the Chief Financial Officer typically attend the site visit. Following the completion of all Site Visits, Impact Central Illinois GRC members invite two organizations to move to Phase 5 – Annual Meeting as finalists.

**Phase 5 – Annual Meeting:** Executive Summaries about each finalist organization and their submitted proposal and budget will be provided in advance to all members of

Impact Central Illinois. In addition, representatives from each finalist will be invited to the Annual Meeting in June and given six minutes to present their grant proposal. At this meeting, Impact Central Illinois members will vote on a grant recipient – with each member casting one ballot – and the winner (or winners) will be announced that evening.

### **Restrictions**

Impact Central Illinois will NOT fund grant proposals containing the following:

- Debt reduction
- Endowments/memorials
- Bridge funding or interim financing
- Operational deficits
- Partisan, political lobbying or legislative activities
- General fund drives, annual appeals, or explicit fundraising events
- Private Foundations
- Advertising (where the sole purpose of the advertising is to raise the profile of the organization for general awareness)
- Litigation/legal expenses for the organization

### **Questions?**

More details about Impact Central Illinois are available on our website at [www.impactcentralillinois.org](http://www.impactcentralillinois.org). If you have any questions about the Impact Central Illinois Grant Cycle, email us at [grants@impactcentralillinois.org](mailto:grants@impactcentralillinois.org).

*Disclaimer: Our Grant Guidelines continue to evolve, and as such, Impact Central Illinois reserves the right to change criteria without prior notice and at any time.*