Guidelines: Applying to Shavlik Family Foundation

The Shavlik Family Foundation focuses on supporting nonprofits that are based in and serve the people, culture, and environment of Minnesota through technology project funding. The Foundation has been able to help organizations improve their operations, program efficiency, collaboration, donor support as well as give access to technology and information to clients and create opportunities for success. We want to see information technology used to empower people and organizations to find their full potential. We encourage potential applicants to Contact Us and discuss your project prior to submission.

Areas of Interest

The Foundation is primarily focused on information and technology resources that remove barriers or build capacity for nonprofits and their clients. For example:

- The utilization of new technology creates a gain of information that in turn provides more choices and improves clients' or the organization's ability to make better decisions.
- The exposure and use of technology to create skills that lead clients to greater self-sufficiency and opportunities.
- Technology that promotes collaborations and record sharing to gain efficiency in serving clients more effectively.
- Ability to use data to improve donor relations resulting in improved fundraising and with it the ability to expand services.
- Improving programs or general operations through the use of a technology that leads to operational savings for an organization.
- Using technology to improve communications and education in ways that lead to greater reach for the organization or the populations they serve.

Grant requests are not limited to these examples. They have just been given to illustrate that funding will require an understanding of the outcomes you want to achieve. The Foundation likes to see technology projects that can make a difference and provide solutions to a specific defined issue.

All projects should include detailed project implementation plans and budgets. Website or projects that increase donors/giving should also include a marketing and communication strategy. Database projects should include a data migration plan when needed. Always include details around the systems and infrastructure that will support the technology. It is important to communicate a connection between the investment in a project to outcomes for the organization, its programs, or who it serves.

The Foundation does not want to just put your organization on par with your peers or fund an upgrade to a current tool or process – we are looking for the projects that will make a transformative change.

Size of Grants

The Foundation awards approximately 15 to 20 grants a year, over two grant cycles. The Foundation welcomes and considers grant requests in the amounts $1,000-30,000 range to support utilizing technology to improve operations, efficiency, fundraising, staff, and clients' access to opportunities.

Technical assistance and consulting costs can be included in the grant application as required by the project and technology being requested. Reasonable staff time may also be included in the grant proposal. The Foundation welcomes collaboration with other grant-makers for larger projects if that support has already been secured.

Limitations on Grant-making

Currently we are accepting grants only from 501(c)(3) non-profits or Tribal governments that are located in and benefit the State of Minnesota. Organizations that are located in Minnesota but serve a population or produce a benefit outside of that state will not be considered. We do not accept grants from individuals or those using a fiscal sponsor.

Multiple year grants are not accepted. Complicated technology projects that take multiple years to complete can be broken down into smaller projects for consideration. We will consider funding larger projects if it means that funding will help deliver the final stage of a project already in progress or if the capital can be assigned to a piece that will stand alone. Ongoing maintenance and sustainability costs should be highlighted in every grant proposal. Technology has a shelf life, showing how your organization plans for that eventuality shows the Foundation that future iterations of a technology are a part of the strategy.

While the Foundation encourages organizations to undertake a full planning process including working with consultants to determine the best solution, this stage is outside our funding focus. It would be premature to apply to us if you have not completed the vetting, budgeting, and implementation plans of the technology project for our consideration. Our focus in funding is on implementation of technology versus the planning stage.

Generally, the Foundation will not:

- Make grants to individuals or for the benefit of pre-selected individuals

- Provide funds to lobby legislation or influence public elections

- Promote any particular religious doctrine or any specific religious organizations

- Serve as replacement funding for public programs

If you have any questions about eligibility, please Contact Us.

We do not fund routine replacement of hardware and software, updates to websites or databases or other technology where it is already being used by the organization. We encourage organizations to create regular budget plans for upgrades within their operating budgets. Also, we are very cautious to fund customized software. Custom software puts the organization in the position of needing to be responsible for its technology and ongoing upgrades and maintenance as platforms change. We feel this can take away from an organization's ability to focus on its core mission. Training of any type must be shown to be incorporated into organizational processes.

If you have already received a grant from the Shavlik Family Foundation you must wait two years (one grant year) before you may apply again. In order to be considered you will have to have submitted a final narrative and financial report to the Foundation at the end of the previous grant awarded.

Grant Process

All grants must be submitted through our electronic system, no paper grants or emailed grants will be accepted. Some web browsers may block your ability to use drop downs in our online system. We recommend using Chrome as your browser when logging into the online application.

We have a two-tiered process. You must first submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) in our system. Your LOI will be reviewed and if our team likes the proposal, you will be then invited to re-enter the web portal and submit a full proposal.

It is important that the email used to login to our system is the email address that we can communicate with throughout our process. If you are a contracted grant writer, you might consider using an email of the contact person at the organization you are applying for.

We encourage you to reach out to us before submitting your proposal, on our Contact Us form or via email at: kelsey@shavlikfoundation.org