



OUR VISION

Vibrant and resilient Reno County communities where every person has the opportunity to thrive

OUR MISSION

Inspire philanthropy, leadership, and collaboration to strengthen Reno County

OUR VALUES

We believe in uniting people and building trust among residents.

We believe in empowering local people to address our most pressing challenges and improve livelihoods, especially for those who are most vulnerable.

We believe in being exemplary stewards and community partners—the go-to source for philanthropy in Reno County.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS 2026 FUND FOR RENO COUNTY GRANTS

The Fund for Reno County, our “community savings account,” was established by the founding Board of Directors of Hutchinson Community Foundation in 1989 as a permanent resource for the changing needs of Reno County. Fund for Reno County proposals allow Foundation representatives—board members, community volunteers, and staff—to hear directly from our communities about their challenges and opportunities.

Some of the grants are small but mighty, while others are large and far-reaching. Each represents an innovative approach or collaboration, a new efficiency for an established organization, a critical need that requires “just in time” funding, or an opportunity that needs a bit of local support to leverage great resources for our communities. Over \$6.3 million has been awarded from the Fund for Reno County to community-based organizations serving Reno County since 1990.

In 2026, Hutchinson Community Foundation will accept proposals for Fund for Reno County grants during two cycles that target specific areas of impact. Project proposals should align with the following Impact Cycle categories and purposes, their deadlines, and their maximum requests.

Impact Cycle 1 – Proposals accepted December 17, 2025 through February 13, 2026

Community & Economic Development

In the 2024 and 2025 [Love Where You Live](#) resident perception surveys and community workshops, we heard that residents were most interested in seeing progress on priorities related to economic development and the built environment. In particular, residents want to see projects that lead to new businesses, with progress indicated by an increase in household income and wages due to higher-quality jobs. Equally important to residents is addressing blight and improving public infrastructure, most clearly measured by the number of buildings in an acute state of blight and an increase to the local tax base.

To make progress on these challenges, this grant program will fund projects that strengthen quality of life and economic confidence, particularly through implementation of the [2026-2030 Elevate Reno County economic development strategic plan](#), including initiatives that:

- Build a diverse, skilled, and resilient workforce and support income growth, particularly for ALICE individuals and families (for more about ALICE, visit [UnitedforALICE.org](#))

- Revitalize and activate Downtowns or central business districts to improve aesthetics and attract investment
- Encourage entrepreneurship and support business start-up and expansion
- Advance placemaking and beautification in public spaces
- Improve housing availability, accessibility, and quality
- Communicate progress and elevate community assets to strengthen resident perceptions

Maximum request of \$50,000; multi-year requests will be considered.

Community Catalyst

At Hutchinson Community Foundation, we want everyone to feel like they can love where they live in Reno County. We know the critical role that strong personal, community, and environmental connections can play in keeping communities healthy and thriving, and we know Reno County is filled with Changemakers ready to continue sparking those connections and increasing community pride and attachment. In the Community Catalyst grants program, we put nurturing community front and center.

Through the [Love Where You Live](#) community empowerment initiative, we have learned how residents perceive their personal commitment, local leadership, and community vision, as well as what opportunities they see to strengthen community confidence. Residents told us they feel committed to their communities and want to be involved, but they're missing a clear picture of the community's direction, clear communications about priorities and progress, and clear pathways to volunteer or be part of decision-making.

In response, this grant program will fund projects across Reno County that improve community engagement, communication, confidence, and pride, such as:

- Experimenting with new ways to communicate with and engage community members
- Creating pathways to local volunteer and leadership opportunities
- Bringing people together for positive social interaction and benefit through community-building efforts
- Connecting people to the environment around them in new ways through creative placemaking
- Communicating a community's long-term vision, goals, and priorities for increased transparency and inclusion in progress
- Taking a "trip to the future" to visit another inspiring community in Kansas that has made meaningful progress in an area you're working on

Maximum request of \$2,500.

Strong Organizations

Among Reno County's strongest assets are the community-based organizations and nonprofits that enhance the lives of the people they serve and our community's quality of life. We believe that high-performing, adaptive, and collaborative organizations are essential to achieving our vision of a vibrant and resilient Reno County where every person has the opportunity to thrive.

The Strong Organizations grant program supports the capacity, effectiveness, and sustainability of Reno County-based nonprofits, such as:

- Communications strategy and planning
- Strategic planning and facilitation
- Fundraising training, consultation, or coaching
- Financial planning and business model coaching
- Leadership and board development
- Program evaluation or expansion
- Upgrade or replacement of equipment, technology, or space

Applicants are required to consult with Foundation program staff before submitting a proposal. Maximum request of \$7,500.

Impact Cycle 2 – Proposals accepted June 1 through August 7, 2026

Dynamic Culture

Hutchinson Community Foundation seeks to support initiatives and organizations that foster vibrant and engaging arts and cultural experiences for our communities, cultivate a strong sense of place, and contribute to the economic and social vitality of our region.

This program will fund projects that enhance and celebrate local arts, theatre, history, and tourism in Reno County, such as:

- Public art projects or installations
- Music and theatre camps and performances
- Development of destination or heritage tourism programs and experiences
- Artist residencies in communities or schools
- Festivals celebrating local culture and heritage
- Creative placemaking that builds on our communities' assets and unique history
- Preservation and exhibition of local historical documents, stories, and artifacts

Maximum request of \$20,000; multi-year requests will be considered.

Thriving Kids

Giving children a strong start—from birth—is one of Hutchinson Community Foundation's highest priorities. Investing in our youngest residents and their families is crucial for building a vibrant and resilient future for Reno County where every person has the opportunity to thrive.

This program will fund projects that support high-quality early care and education, youth development, and families, such as:

- Child care program quality improvements
- Programs that strengthen family resilience and connection
- Engaging experiences for youth to feel connected to each other and their communities
- Playground and educational equipment and experiences
- Mentorship programs for at-risk and high-potential youth

Maximum request of \$20,000; multi-year requests will be considered.

Proposals for ***Community Catalyst*** and ***Strong Organizations*** will be considered again in Impact Cycle 2, pending funding availability.

CRITERIA & INFORMATION FOR PROPOSALS

Who can apply?

Proposals must come from public charities that are exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) and serve Reno County, Kansas. Special purpose units of government may apply for support of innovative projects. Community groups who do not have a 501(c)(3) status may apply for grant awards if another tax-exempt organization acts as a fiscal sponsor. Grant proposals from individuals or non-qualifying organizations will not be considered. Applicants must comply with discrimination laws.

How much funding can an organization apply for?

Proposals are reviewed and awarded by community volunteers on Hutch CF's Grants Committee. Each grant cycle has a maximum request amount (refer to each grant program). The Grants Committee may choose to partially fund an applicant's requested budget. Organizations may submit applications in more than one grant category, if appropriate.

What kinds of proposals will NOT be funded?

Ineligible projects include religious indoctrination or other proselytization activities, deficit financing, lobbying, electioneering and activities of a political nature, sponsorships for special events, endowment building, direct fundraising, ongoing programmatic support, and reimbursement of pre-award costs.

What are the qualities of the most successful proposals?

Systems and Environment Change – Proposals that go beyond programming and into changing policies, systems, and environments that lead to improving the livelihoods of all people, especially for those who are most vulnerable.

Inclusion – Proposals that intentionally include the presence of the target population in the project co-creation, implementation, and evaluation.

Collaboration – Proposals that strengthen partnerships between organizations, sectors, or stakeholders, maximizing resources and aligning efforts to achieve shared objectives.

Innovation – Proposals that introduce original ideas, creative strategies, or bold solutions to address complex challenges, showing a willingness to experiment and adapt.

Effective Organizations – Proposals that evaluate, expand, or improve the effective services, operations, and leadership of established organizations.

Need – Proposals that provide a demonstrable and timely need for this project, and the organization is in a key position to meet that need.

Feasibility – Proposals that present a well thought-out strategy for achieving goals with a cost-effective budget.

Where is the Love Where You Live data and Elevate Reno County plan?

Love Where You Live is a three-year community empowerment initiative designed to provide Reno County communities (and the county as a whole) with data and a process that will empower residents to make positive change and boost community pride. Data and stories from the first two years of the initiative can be found at RenoSurvey.com.

In response to what residents have prioritized through this initiative, the Foundation has partnered with Greater Hutch, StartUp Hutch, Reno County, City of Hutchinson, and the City of South Hutchinson on the development and now implementation of the Elevate Reno County economic development strategic plan. The plan, the benchmark analysis, and recordings of presentations can be found on Greater Hutch's website [here](#).

How does the Foundation communicate nonprofit funding needs to its donors?

In an effort to educate donors about nonprofit needs and attract more funding, summaries of select proposals may be shared with the Foundation's Donor Advised Fund holders during the consideration process through the Giving Together program. If a DAF contributes to a grant, the grantee will be notified in their award letter. Otherwise, the Foundation publishes and mails an annual Grantmaking Newsletter each November with all of the year's funded proposals.

PROCEDURE FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

Proposals must be submitted online through the Foundant Grant Lifecycle Manager (GLM) system, accessed through HutchCF.org. Applicant organizations must have a profile in the system in order to apply.

Notification of approvals and denials will be sent within 6 weeks of each deadline.

APPLICANT & GRANTEE EXPECTATIONS

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to participate in ***Partnering for Impact: A Nonprofit Strength Workshop***. This two-hour workshop is designed for nonprofits who want to strengthen their proposals, their organizational capacity, and their partnerships. The workshop will offer a clear look at Hutchinson Community Foundation's funding priorities, grant programs, and Nonprofit Strength

programs, alongside practical guidance for the online grant platform, grant-writing best practices, and structured time to learn from and collaborate with other organizations tackling shared challenges.

Partnering for Impact will be offered at two different times: Monday, January 12 from 1-3pm and Thursday, January 22 from 9-11am at Hutchinson Community Foundation. [Advance registration is required here.](#)

To best position their proposal for success, applicants are also strongly encouraged to speak with Hutch CF program staff ahead of their submission to discuss their project and approach.

Upon award, grant recipients must sign and submit a grant agreement as assigned in GLM in order to receive their grant check.

Grant recipients are expected to participate in grantee convenings and events, as communicated by Hutch CF, and as well as follow all communication guidelines. In 2026, that includes a grantee convening on April 23 and the public celebration of Fund for Reno County grant awards at UPLIFT 2026 on October 8.

Grantees are required to complete and submit a report midway through the grant project to assist the Community Foundation in telling the story of the project's impact. A final report is due 30 days following the completion of the project and no later than one year after the grant award date. Reports will be requested via email for completion in the GLM online system. Failure to complete final reports on time may impact an organization's ability to receive future funding from the Community Foundation.

Contact senior program officer Jan Steen at Jan@HutchCF.org or 620.663.5293 with questions, or visit www.HutchCF.org.