NEBRASKA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT GRANTS

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Each generation in our state has unique gifts to offer their hometowns. Communities across Nebraska are inviting young people to co-create the future of their places, recognizing that younger generations aren't just future leaders – they are leaders today. To encourage intergenerational collaboration in the network, Nebraska Community Foundation is excited to offer Youth Engagement Grants designed to unleash community possibilities *with* young people, not just *for* them.

Youth Engagement Grant Contact
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What is a Youth Engagement Grant?
The purpose of Nebraska Community Foundation's Youth Engagement Grants is to support intergenerational community building. By providing guidance, funding, and a collaborative framework, these grants are designed to help support youth-led initiatives, projects that engage youth, and opportunities that bring generations together in community. Through this process, NCF hopes to inspire experimentation, celebrate belonging, and champion local FACs and youth who want to co-create the future of Greater Nebraska. Youth Engagement Grants are funded by a generous anonymous donor to NCF.

Learn more about all of NCF's Youth Engagement opportunities at nebcommfound.org/youth-engagement

We invite NCF Affiliated Funds and youth to take an asset-based approach, with emphasis on the following:

- **Abundance,** not scarcity; **assets**, not needs
- Opportunities, not deficiencies
- Invite people into the conversation and co-create
- Incremental progress creates change that sticks
- Community-led and community-owned
- Build relationships before you need them
- People belong through having their gifts and talents received and appreciated
- Volunteer associations (i.e. community-based affiliated funds) are very powerful and are essential to build community.

At the heart of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) is belonging. While developing your idea for a Youth Engagement Grant, please seek abundant opportunities to extend belonging to others- particularly younger generations.

Here are the basics

- NCF Youth Engagement Grant applications may be submitted at any time
- Ideas can be initiated by either affiliated fund members or local youth
- Funding for Youth Engagement Grants is flexible and will be determined in collaboration with the affiliated fund and youth based on local context and opportunities
- NCF Youth Engagement Grants **require at least a 1:1 cash match from the participating affiliated fund**
- NCF Youth Engagement Grant participant communities may be invited to share their ideas, discoveries, and outcomes
- NCF Youth Engagement Grant inquiry forms must be filled out by both an affiliated fund representative and a young person from the community

Need some inspiration?

Below are examples of awesome work already happening across the NCF network. We warmly invite you to propose your own bold, original ideas for consideration!

- Projects initiated by Youth Advisory Committee
- Hometown Intern-initiated projects
- Park improvements
- Pickleball courts
- Youth Engagement Camp for elementary students to discover local assets and dream about the future
- Inclusive playground where local youth are invited into planning and fundraising
- Youth entrepreneurship camp
- Oral history collection led by students inviting older generations to share their stories
- Community gardens
- Community gatherings and celebrations planned and executed by local young people
- Project funds for FCCLA, FFA, FBLA student initiatives
- Drive-in movie theater
- Intergenerational needle nights at the local library
- Pen pal clubs
- Free theater camp

How do we apply?
NCF is taking an iterative, relational, and asset-based approach to the process. Here's what interested funds can expect:

Step One:
We invite you to connect with youth in your community to imagine possibilities. Share your ideas, dreams, and imagine what's possible together. This is an opportunity to experiment about what might connect young people more deeply to their hometowns.

Once you have an idea to explore, please fill out this simple inquiry form. We ask that both an affiliated fund representative and a young person submit the form together. This does not need to be a fully formed program or budget, we invite your brainstorming and curiosity!

Youth Engagement Grant Interest Form

Step Two:
Share your idea with NCF! After you submit your idea, we'll follow up for an opportunity to dive deeper into your ideas. At that time, we can begin to work together to:

- Explore opportunities for intergenerational collaboration
- Investigate ways to enhance your idea using local assets and community strengths
- Identify the level of support and resources that will help your idea take shape
- Consider how your experiment can connect, unleash, and inspire others across the NCF Network

Step Three:
Once your project is ready, NCF issues a 1:1 matching grant to the local affiliated fund to move forward. Then, the real fun begins!

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is the annual funding cap per Affiliated Fund?**
  Affiliated Funds may pursue 1:1 NCF matching Youth Engagement Grants up to $50,000 per fiscal year.

- **How can these grants be used for Early Childhood Education or collaboration with young children (birth to 10)?**
  Youth Engagement Grants related to ECE should support community-led efforts that draw upon local gifts and assets to create meaningful experiences, welcoming spaces, and stronger connections for very young children and their families.

  Examples
  - Youth Serviceship/Engagement Camps: In communities across the state, FACs invite elementary school students (often K-6th grade) to participate in a day of discovering community and dreaming of possibilities. As kids participate year after year, they

become mentors for younger participants. These experiences often unleash more Youth Engagement Grants.
    - Stuart Brain Builders Edible Schoolyard: Children at the early childhood center in Stuart were invited to draw their dreams for a future garden at the center. They also were able to ask questions about what it's like to grow a garden- and they will see it in action.
    - The Valley Child Development Center Adopt-A-Crop: TVCDC invited Red Cloud community members to care for their garden alongside students. This creates space for the community and the Center to build a deeper connection around local food systems.
    - Step Up to Quality or other opportunities to close the quality gap in a community

- **Is there a funding cap for capital or physical projects?**
  Capital and physical projects may be funded up to $50,000. Building projects (funding an actual building like a community center, school, etc. that did not formerly exist) require a 2:1 match.

  Renovation projects, such as renovating an existing building into a youth space or renovating a park, do not count as building projects. Thus, renovation projects are eligible for a 1:1 match.

- **What are the expectations around local matching funds?**
  Transactions should flow through the Affiliated Fund as much as possible. The matching dollars may come from the account of the AF's choosing. If the matching funds are held in an account outside the Affiliated Fund (i.e. at a local bank or with the city), documentation must be provided to show the matching funds being disbursed before NCF will issue their match.

  Affiliated Funds may also raise the matching dollars specifically for the project. The fundraised dollars must also flow through the Affiliated Fund.

- **What is the potential for multi-year grants, and how might they be structured?**
  There is potential for multi-year funding, particularly when a project or idea would benefit from a longer runway. However, Youth Engagement Grant funding should not automatically become an ongoing income line in an organizational budget, since the current funding opportunity is available for only eight years.

  If an Affiliated Fund has a big idea that is a strong fit for multi-year support, this is a wonderful opportunity to think beyond the grant itself: What would it take to sustain this work over time? Who else might invest? What relationships need to be built? What could fundraising or other local resources look like?

  In other words, multi-year funding can provide a runway for a big idea while also creating space for communities to think about long-term sustainability and local ownership.

Who Should I contact if I have questions?

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