



# 100 Years and Growing!

The Ashtabula Foundation remains committed to its vision and mission, to be both a proactive and responsive force in addressing charitable causes in Ashtabula County through grant funding. Do you know how an organization qualifies for a grant and who can apply?

“All non-profit organizations within Ashtabula County that have been granted 501(c)(3) status by the Internal Revenue Service are eligible to apply for a grant and the funds are to benefit all residents throughout Ashtabula County who seek greater quality in educational, religious, and cultural pursuits.

That leads to two more questions: “What, exactly, is a non-profit?” and, “What is 501(c)(3) status?”

A non-profit is an organization that has been granted tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service because it furthers a social cause and provides a public benefit. Donations made to a non-profit organization are typically tax-deductible, and the non-profit itself pays no tax on the received donations or on any other money earned through fundraising activities. Before it can receive a tax exemption, an organization needs to request 501(c)(3) status from the IRS.

Additionally, a 501(c)(3) is a portion of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code and a specific tax category for non-profit organizations that serve a charitable purpose. Therefore, to be eligible to apply for a grant an organization must first receive its 501(c)(3) credentials from the IRS.

If an organization qualifies as a non-profit and has been granted a 501(c)(3) status, what's next?

Next, is the formal application which requires specific information about the organization and the proposed project. And because the competition for grant money is always keen, non-profits must go into detail explaining their needs when requesting grants. The Foundation's Board of Directors has no easy task deciding who will be awarded a grant and the amount.

Therefore, a grant request of \$5,000 or more requires a letter of intent prior to completing a grant application. The letter should include a brief description of the reason for the request, the dollar amount requested, other sources of financing if applicable, a priority rating, and the number of people to be affected.

Using guidelines for a Human Services Grant application, the Foundation's largest grant category and usually where most of the funding goes, the application requires specifics of the purpose of the grant, the project's total cost and the amount requested from the Ashtabula Foundation. The application will also require two quotes for any materials to be purchased. Information about the organization requesting the grant is required by the application, including its purpose and organizational structure. A financial plan is required as well as confirmation of its 501(c)(3) status and various budget reports.

“We have grant categories grouped together and each are open at different times within the calendar year,” explained the Foundation's Associate Director Kelley Katon. “Our largest cycle, our Human Services cycle, opens each year on January 1 and the letter of intent for it closes the last business day in January.”

The second cycle includes the Arts/Culture/Historical, Education, and Recreation/Conservation categories, opens on the first business day in February each year and the letter of intent for it is due on the last business day in February. The third cycle includes Community Development, Religion, and Other categories, opens the first week of May and the letter of intent is due on the last business day in June. “Our ‘Other’ category is for needs that don't fall under any of the categories offered earlier in the year,” Katon said.

“Our quick reply grant cycle, which is known to the community as our \$5,000 and below grants cycle, also opens on January 1, however, this smaller cycle remains open through November 15 each year,” she said. Grant requests for \$5,000 or less do not require a letter of intent, only an application.

More detailed information of the application process is available by contacting the Foundation by telephone at (440) 992-6818 or at its website at [www.ashtabulafoundation.org](http://www.ashtabulafoundation.org) or by e-mail at [ashtabulafdn@gmail.com](mailto:ashtabulafdn@gmail.com).

**Watch for next month's article to learn more about the Ashtabula Foundation.  
Celebrating 100 years of service!**