



Nonprofit Agency Funding Policy

February 7, 2011

Purpose: To establish a policy that ensures an accountable, objective, and fair process for submitting, reviewing, and approving nonprofit agency grant or loan requests.

Policy: Lee County Government has no statutory requirement to fund nonprofit agencies. Accordingly, it is the policy of the Board of Commissioners not to provide recurring annual funding to non-governmental agencies, aside from those who provide a vital, contracted service to the County. Notwithstanding the above, Lee County Government may, when circumstances warrant, elect to enter into a contract with or provide a low-interest loan to a non-profit agency to provide services that are vital to the County. In each case, the Board of Commissioners will carefully review the circumstances surrounding the request and determine the urgency of need of the agency's requested assistance and its value to the County.

In each case, the programs or services provided by the non-profit agency must do one or more of the following:

- Complement or enhance a vital county service at a reduced cost
- Provide a service to the County through means that are more cost effective or operationally expedient than what the government can provide
- Fill in a critical gap that may exist between government services and community needs

Procedures:

1. Application Process

- A public notice announcing the annual review process for applications will be made on the County's website and in the *Sanford Herald* in February each year. This annual process is timed to complement the County's annual budget process.
- The application form will be available from the County's website, the Finance Office and the Lee County Library.
- Nonprofit agencies that have a compelling need for County funding may complete the nonprofit funding application.
- Applications are made available annually in February and are due back to the County Finance Department by the published deadline.
- Applications received after the published deadline will not be considered for inclusion in the annual budget for funding in that fiscal year, but will be processed by the County and given consideration by the Board of Commissioners, who may elect to grant funding on an exceptional basis, if the circumstances warrant.

- Applications that are incomplete will be deemed ineligible for funding and will be returned to the nonprofit agency with explanation of rejection.
- Submission of a complete and compelling application is no assurance of funding.
- A public hearing will be held to allow nonprofit applicants to address the Board of County Commissioners, and for the public to comment on the merits of the funding request.

2. Review & Funding Process

- Eligible applications will be reviewed by the County Manager and his designees.
- A recommendation for funding and a recommended amount will be presented to the Board of Commissioners for their consideration as part of the annual budget process.
- Upon the County Commissioners' approval of the annual budget, letters will be sent to the agencies who submitted applications for funding notifying them of the outcome of their requests. If approved for funding, the agency will coordinate with designated County staff for completion of the required contract.
- The County will consider funding on an annual basis only, unless the Board of Commissioners makes an exception.
- Applications for funding are effective for one year. Each new budget year will require validation and submission for each funding request.

Funding Criteria: Applications will be reviewed and recommended for funding based on the following:

- Must submit IRS tax-exempt letter stating 501c3 non-profit status
- Must submit completed application by published deadline
- Must state community need for services and provide a service that meets the descriptions in the policy statement above
- Must state achievable, outcome-based goals and outline a plan to meet goals
- Must not duplicate services already funded by Lee County
- Must demonstrate diversity of funding sources
- Must demonstrate financial stability

Requirements to Receive Funding:

- Enter into a contract with Lee County for the delivery of services
 1. the contract will include:
 - a. the scope of services to be provided
 - b. payment arrangements
 - c. a requirement for performance monitoring and submission of an annual report documenting program success
- The County at its discretion, may require an examination of any agency's financial statements
- An annual performance report documenting the use of the County's funds and the accomplishments of the program will be submitted at the end of the fiscal year. Failure to comply with any of the above requirements may result in suspension of current funding and/or elimination of future funding