

Better Together

2026 Strategic Alignment Grant Program

The Strategic Alignment Grant Program invests in the exploration of strategic alignment strategies between two or more nonprofit organizations in coming together to enhance systemic support around a community issue/priority, align operations/programming, or deepen partnerships. Strategic alignment could be defined as **coordination** (formal relationships around specific efforts or programs that leverage efficiency and effectiveness for individual organizations) or **collaboration** (pooled or jointly secured resources with defined and measured outcomes that have social impact beyond one organization).

Examples of well-aligned projects:

- Exploration of shared staffing between organizations
- Facilitated dialog between multiple boards considering a merger
- Collective planning/assessment among multiple partners seeking to address a community issue

Grant amounts:

Organizations may apply for up to \$25,000.

Timeline:

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis; decisions are communicated in approximately 10 business days.

Steps to Apply

Our goal is to help facilitate strong applications. For this reason, we encourage potential applicants to explore project alignment with a member of the Community Impact Team prior to submitting a grant application.

Step 1: Schedule

Contact Ellie Burns, Senior Director of Nonprofit Impact, burns@desmoinesfoundation.org, to schedule a Strategic Alignment Grant conversation.

Step 2: Meet

During the meeting, discuss alignment of your project, potential consultants and work plans, and the budget for the work.

Step 3: Share

Send a draft of your application to our team prior to submission - we will provide feedback to help you submit the best possible request.

Step 4: Submit

Complete the Strategic Alignment Grant Application Form and upload your supporting documents at bit.ly/StrategicAlignmentGrant

Strategic Alignment Grant Application Questions

Organization Information

- Contact information for Executive Director/CEO and Grant Contact
- Project Title
- Employer Identification Number / Tax ID, Address, Website
- Fiscal Sponsor EIN, if applicable

Budget Information

- Funding request amount
- Total project budget
- Organization's total annual budget
- If the request is partially funded with a Strategic Alignment grant, will the project continue?

Project Information

- Provide an overview of the organizations exploring collaboration or strategic alignment, including mission statements and future goals.
- State the need for alignment exploration and how it will be addressed with the grant funds.
- Please identify and describe how your project will focus on coordination (formal relationships around specific efforts or programs that leverage efficiency and effectiveness for individual organizations) or collaboration (pooled or jointly secured resources that have defined and measured outcomes that have social impact beyond one organization).
- Share the anticipated timeline for the project.
- Please share any additional stakeholders you anticipate will engage in the project.
- Do the organizations plan to work with a consultant

Required Documents

- Project budget detailing other sources of funding including your organization's and/or board's financial commitment and the amount requested from the Community Foundation.
- List of each organization's Board of Directors.
- Consultant Work Plan (if applicable), including the hourly rate for the consultant, estimated number of hours for the project, and deliverables

Keep in Mind:

Projects not eligible or competitive for Strategic Alignment Grants may be a better fit for GIVEdsm.

Ineligible projects include:

- Ongoing annual operating and program expenses
- Capital infrastructure projects (bricks and mortar)
- Sectarian religious programs promoting a particular faith
- Tactical items such as hardware/equipment, collateral materials, donor management software or website development

Requests for strategic planning assistance, succession planning support, fund development planning, business planning development or board governance should consider applying for a Capacity Building Grant.

For questions about the Strategic Alignment Grant Program, please contact:

Ellie Burns, Senior Director of Nonprofit Impact

burns@desmoinesfoundation.org

(515) 883-2629

