

2018 - Friends of the Finland Community - 18-64133

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Applicant Organization

Applicant Organization Name	Friends of the Finland Community
Applicant Legal Name	Friends of the Finland Community
Employer Identification Number (if none, leave blank)	83-0494175
Website	http://www.friendsoffinland.org
First Name	Honor
Last Name	Schauland
Title	Director
Email	honor@friendsoffinland.org
Is Your organization certified by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) public charity?	Yes

Is your organization a public agency/unit of government or Indian tribal government under Section 7871 of the Internal Revenue Code?

No

What is your current fiscal year operating budget?

\$50,000 - \$99,999

Has your organization previously applied for a Community Innovation Grant?

Yes-Bush Foundation

Has your organization received a Community Innovation Grant?

No

If yes, does the proposed work build on a previous Community Innovation Grant? Please reference this connection in your answers to the narrative application questions.

What is the requested grant term?

24

Total Amount Requested (between \$10,000 and \$200,000)

\$200,000.00

Where will the proposed work take place?

Minnesota

Please select the pool in which you would like your proposal to be reviewed. You should select based on where the majority of the proposed work will take place.

Minnesota and the Native Nations that share the same geography

What issue area(s) is addressed through the proposed work?

Environment; Health; Public & Societal Benefit

What best describes the geographic community served by the proposed work?

Rural

Sponsored Project (If Applicable)

Sponsored Project (Organization or Group Name)

Sponsored Project Mailing Address

Sponsored Project City

Sponsored Project State

Sponsored Project Zip Code

Sponsored Project Phone

Sponsored Project Website

Sponsored Project Primary Contact First Name

Sponsored Project Primary Contact Last Name

Sponsored Project Primary Contact Title

Sponsored Project Primary Contact Email

Context

1. Provide a title for the work you are proposing. Building a Healthier Food and Economic System in Finland Minnesota

2. In 3,000 characters or less (approximately 500 words), provide a brief introduction to: Finland MN is a very small rural community near the north shore of Lake Superior.

a. Your organization and any people or organizations working closely with you on this project. As the applicant organization, describe why you are well positioned to lead this work. If you're applying as a fiscal sponsor, please briefly describe both your

Friends of the Finland Community (FFC) was formed after the process that created the Crystal Bay Comprehensive Community Plan. A group of citizens realized that a nonprofit such as the Friends could help carry on the momentum started by the Comprehensive planning process and work towards making the community's vision a reality. The group was incorporated as a nonprofit in 2007. Since then, FFC helped to raise the funds to build the Clair Nelson Finland Community Center (the biggest priority identified by the Comp Plan) and currently manages the Center in partnership with Crystal Bay Township as well as managing social, recreational and economic development programs out of the facility. In addition, the group puts on a number of local events, manages the Clair Nelson Vocational

organization and the group you're sponsoring.

b. Your community. What do we need to understand about your community or context to better understand the work you are proposing?

Scholarship Fund and partners with multiple other community groups to carry out common goals.

The Community Center boasts a large solar PV array, geothermal heating and a high-performance building envelope for maximum energy efficiency. The facility also contains two meeting rooms, an office, bathrooms, a stage, a gym/multipurpose room, and a commercial kitchen that is utilized as a food business incubator. Some of the Center's most successful programs include a Youth Program for area kids, a monthly community potluck, a weekly craft group, a summer Farmers Market, and many other social and recreational activities.

For this project, Friends of Finland plans to partner with the Organic Consumers Association (OCA), an online and grassroots nonprofit public interest organization campaigning for health, justice, and sustainability. The OCA deals with issues of food safety, industrial agriculture, genetic engineering, children's health, corporate accountability, Fair Trade, environmental sustainability and other key topics. The OCA's national office is located in Finland, MN. OCA has proudly supported many local community endeavors since its founding; Round River Farm, the development of the Wolf Ridge Organic Farm, and particularly the formation of Friends of the Finland Community and the community project to build the Clair Nelson Finland Community Center. The OCA is currently building a demonstration farm school called the AgroEcology Center which will provide space and infrastructure for demonstrating permaculture farming and design and other sustainable farming techniques.

We also plan to partner with Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center, particularly their kitchen staff and their Organic Farm, both of whom work together closely to grow as many of their vegetables as possible, and who have committed to 90% local sourcing of their food.

And we plan to work with the Finland Co-operative General Store, the only existing grocery store in Finland, which formed 105 years ago to help residents meet their needs by helping them collectively procure food and other goods.

We are trying to address a number of problems by improving the local food and economic system. Finland has a population of about 475 people in a remote area of Northern Minnesota. Much of the population is over age 55. This community is at the end of the supply chain for access for healthy foods. Our county, Lake County ranks very poorly in the County Health rankings; 70 out of 87 for Health Outcomes. Our Quality of Life score is 80 out of 87. In 2015, Friends of Finland did a strategic planning process, holding community forums and revamping our township's Comprehensive Plan. The issues that play into the County Health Ranking came up regularly; poverty, lack of access to services and healthy foods, the need for local wild rice processing, and the need for more social connections between people of all ages. Citizens have identified the needs, now they want to do something about it.

Funding and services do not seem to reach all the way to the rural areas that desperately need them. Funding stops in population centers. In extremely rural areas, people can't always get to the population centers to use those services. OCA is working to expand

3. What is the problem that you're trying to solve with the work proposed in this application? How did you decide to focus on this problem? Who informed, or was involved in, identifying the problem that you are working on solving?

4. Why is it important to address this problem now? How is the identified problem typically addressed in your field or community? Describe

the current “status quo” approach and why something different is needed.

services by developing the AgroEcology Center. Wolf Ridge is trying to increase self-sufficiency and local procurement. The Finland Co-op is expanding organic offerings. Friends of Finland wants to create a food hub where quantities of healthy food can be obtained, processed, stored, and redistributed. Each entity wants these to be positive complementary community assets and infrastructure that will be well received and well used by local residents. In collaboration all stakeholders will be better able to draw in area residents and connect all of these assets to produce positive change, and showcase that work to a broader audience

Problem-Solving Process

5. In 1,800 characters or less (approximately 300 words),

a. Provide a short overview of the problem-solving process you will use to pursue a breakthrough. (Two to three sentences.)

b. Provide a numbered list of key activities you are proposing during the grant term.

6. Describe the work that brought you to this point and how it has informed the activities you’ve proposed for this grant.

Friends of Finland seeks to partner with other local resources, including but not limited to the OCA AgroEcology Center to work together and create community participation in our food and economic system for the common good. We would hire coordinators or organizers to do this work and involve the neighbors and general public in various ways.

Coordinator/Organizers will work to:

- 1 - formalize a community steering committee representing individuals, businesses, organizations and local government to assist with developing and implementing projects within the initiative to meet community needs. Some possible options include a food hub facility and local wild rice processing equipment; both are needs that have already been identified.
- 2 - assess the food access needs of the community (through interviews and surveys) and develop an appropriate food hub model that meets these needs. Again, a identified need is a space that would allow collective purchasing of chicken feed and a grinder to get a better (local farmer direct) group price and storage options.
- 3 - explore related educational gaps and develop and plan for both classroom and on-the-ground training for residents and potentially visitors.
- 4 - investigate, instigate and develop more home-based business opportunities that will further empower, bring equity and social connectedness.
- 5 - develop and build infrastructure needed to achieve these assessed needs. Materials and capital development financed by the various stakeholders. There is also a small business revolving loan fund that could be utilized but needs more development. Friends of Finland is developing a community orchard and will continue all current programs, particularly the Center's kitchen Business Incubator, Farmers Market and Community Ed Classes.

Our original comprehensive planning process back in 2004 delved into ways to use the planned Community Center as a space for economic development, particularly to support food-related and/or home-based businesses. Friends of Finland hosts an annual Community Conversation where similar issues have been discussed for the last 3 years. The Center's kitchen business incubator currently hosts a developing tempeh maker and has been used for a few cooking classes and healthy eating demonstrations. There is also a growing Farmers Market at the Center every Thursday evening. We also recently planted edible landscaping at the Center that we will be looking for ways to use and develop further in the near future. OCA has been building their permaculture demonstration farm, which has

grown to include a farm house, barn, gardens and farm fields, beekeeping and a deep winter greenhouse.

Besides the organizations involved, which include a good variety of community members already, we intend to involve the neighbors first. This has already begun, but there is a lot more work to be done to involve people and help them feel welcome and included in these efforts. We need project coordinators/spokespeople who can go door to door to keep the neighborhood informed and to personally invite people to stop in and see what is going on and become involved. We would engage our already active youth program and the families of the kids. We would work to include Elders as well, many of whom have farming, gardening, and harvesting skills or knowledge that could be shared and taught. In the case of those who are in need of wild rice processing or chicken feed or similar needs, we would create a committee of interested parties who would give direction to address that specific need.

Honor Schauland (Director of Friends of Finland), Marc Smith (Friends of Finland Board Chair), and David Abazs (Director of the OCA AgroEcology Center), have worked together before on many community efforts, most notably the project to build the Community Center, which was also a project with shared ownership and decision-making. The groundwork for that kind of collaborative process is already laid; we would simply involve a lot more people and organizations in the collaboration. These three would be the main drivers and directors of the project collaboration. All three believe strongly in grassroots democracy and community problem-solving. To begin, we would formalize a steering committee representing individuals, businesses, organizations, and local government to develop and work with coordinators and organizers to implement projects within this initiative to meet community needs.

We have a lot of assets already that will all be utilized for this project. This is a small community with a long history of cooperation and collaboration. Many of us wear multiple hats for more than one organization. We usually know who possesses the skills or has the connections we need to get from Point A to Point B, and usually people are willing to help if they are asked. The Community Center and its staff have a proven track record of being collaborative and driving positive change already. The OCA has a proven track record of supporting community endeavors and employing talented local young people. We have connections with Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center, to the Finland Co-operative General Store, to the Community Church, to the local Fire Department, and to many other different community groups and organizations. We will use these connections to draw input and expertise.

7. WHO will you engage in problem-solving? We are looking for processes that are inclusive: meaningfully engaging key stakeholders - thoughtfully identifying those needed to create the intended change and, whenever possible, including those directly affected by the problem.

8. HOW will you work with other partners through the problem-solving process? Describe the group that has come together to work on this project, the various roles of the people and organizations that are involved and how you make decisions together. We are looking for processes that are collaborative: a true joint effort, with partners willing to share ownership and decision-making as they pursue an innovation together.

9. WHAT community assets and resources will you build on as you pursue a solution to your community problem? We are looking for processes that are resourceful: using existing resources and assets creatively to make the most of what a community already has.

Outcomes & Innovation

Progress during grant term:

10. Provide a numbered list of key outcomes you

1. Economy: Local economy enhanced by jobs created and small businesses created or enhanced. Scalable models and real-life examples of local food business/entrepreneurial startups. Existing kitchen business incubator at the Community Center expanded. Surplus produce from Community Center edible landscaping and OCA AgroEcology Center donated

anticipate achieving by the end of the grant term. What will increase, decrease, improve, etc. because of the work you've proposed? This is the place to be practical about what you hope to accomplish during this grant period.

Your long-term vision:

11. This is the place to dream. You're building towards a community innovation - a breakthrough in addressing a community need that is more effective, equitable or sustainable than existing approaches. What is the breakthrough you imagine one day? What will be different because of it? How will your community be changed?

12. Is a primary purpose of the proposed work to actively reduce structural and/or systemic gaps in access, outcomes, opportunities or treatment

to local food shelf.

2. Ecology: Models of healthy opportunities and solutions that maintain our resources, keeping our water, air, soil, and living environments clean. Community composting started to keep compostable materials out of the waste stream and create viable chicken feed. Model permaculture and other techniques that build soil, utilize native plants and crops that are suitable for our unique climate and terrain.

3. Equity: Home and community gardening will provide nutritious low-cost food for families. Lower prices and the means for healthier food in the community through community-based wild rice processing or grain grinding for local flour or livestock feed. Organic and healthy food affordable for low-income people. Low-cost or free class options or scholarships if necessary.

4. Education: Revived skills of canning, drying, fermenting and freezing homegrown food as a bridge to connect our older population and our youth. More excitement, interest in healthy eating. Fewer barriers to healthy eating - cost, access, storage, skills. Community members know and continue to know how to grow and raise their own food. Community Center and AgroEcology Center will have tours and classes specifically for elders and youth.

5. Empowerment: Lift up "champions" and support their work within this community. Mentoring relationships between youth and adults, especially elders. Everyone is welcome at the table. Pooling of resources.

The Comprehensive Community planning process, as well as the process to build the Community Center (2005-2010) really brought the community of Finland together. Now it's becoming clear that the Community Center is really beginning to revitalize the area. There is a space for community events, programs and activities to take place, sometimes simultaneously. It is developing as a space for education, training, job creation, business start-up and support, all of which build use of the overall Center, and enhance the economy of the surrounding communities. We hope to reverse the economic downturn our area has experienced through the conscious development of home based, creative and local food and craft businesses.

OCA's project to develop the AgroEcology Center has the potential to greatly benefit the community as well. It will certainly create jobs and generate interest no matter what. The biggest community and health impact it can have, however, will be if the community helps to plan and build it and work on projects there. This initiative can accomplish that. Working together, we can get community members involved, and we can pool our resources to solve community problems.

The projects that this initiative will accomplish will enhance the economic climate in our area one household at a time, from the ground up. This will truly be asset-based community development, the way Finland has created most of its accomplishments. This work will create more income, access and stability for community members, at the same time creating social connections and a more vibrant community by involving everyone. This work will also enhance the community's health outcomes, health factors and health equity because it will improve conditions where people live, work and play.

Yes

based on a person's race/ethnicity or economic standing? **At least 50% of Community Innovation grants will be for projects that address racial and/or economic disparities.**

13. If yes, how? Optional. The Bush Foundation will take your entire application into consideration when determining whether your work fits the above commitment. If your work does not actively work to address racial and/or economic disparities, you do not need to provide an answer to this question.

Whether it is by broadening opportunities for folks to start up or expand a small business, have better access to healthy foods, learn how to garden or can their own food, or buy cheaper chicken feed collectively, this initiative will improve the economic climate in Finland, MN and the surrounding area.

In the 2000 Census, Crystal Bay Township's (our local unit of government) per capita income was about \$14,000. Things have improved somewhat over time, but in 2010, the per capita income was still only about \$21,000, with a margin of error of +/- \$3,000. (Crystal Bay Township is so small that the 2010 Census didn't bother to get very specific data, it just gives an "estimate" with a margin of error that is sometimes quite large.) This entire initiative will provide access and opportunities that do not exist in this area in its current state.

Attachments

Project Budget (required)

An application without a project budget is not considered complete and will not be reviewed or considered. A sample budget is available to view on our website.

Sr. Number	File Name	Created Date
1	Finland Community Innovation Budget 2018.xls	04/12/2018

Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement (if applicable)

If a fiscal sponsorship relationship is part of this application, the signed fiscal sponsorship agreement must be included. An application without the signed agreement is not considered complete and will not be reviewed or considered.

No Attachments

