



2021 CenterPoint Foundation Charitable Giving Guidelines
Please read all information before applying for a grant, including the FAQs.

Who We Are

The CenterPoint Energy Foundation (“Foundation”) strives to be a catalyst in our communities by leveraging everyday opportunities and resources to achieve extraordinary outcomes. That’s why we invest in initiatives that not only improve our stakeholders’ lives today, but also build a strong foundation for tomorrow. Our corporate giving focuses on fostering a high quality of life in the communities we serve.

CenterPoint Energy recognizes that our success – and the success of our neighbors -- is inextricably linked to the vibrancy of our communities. We seek to improve the communities we serve by supporting programs that encourage community connections, improve quality of life and promote inclusion to help communities thrive. We recognize that an educated and engaged community is critical to the future of our business and our communities. We are committed to ensuring all students have the opportunities and tools they need to succeed academically, explore potential careers and be equipped to enter the workforce.

Key Facts to Understand Before You Apply

The Foundation awards grants annually to eligible organizations in Arkansas, Indiana, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Ohio, Oklahoma and Texas, where our company has a business presence. A list of counties CenterPoint Energy serves is located in Appendix A attached to this document.

We will review proposals from eligible organizations where our company has a business presence during the grant cycles below. We encourage organizations to submit requests during the cycle that works best for their budget as **funds are available in each cycle**. Applications must be submitted by the deadline to be considered for funding.

2021 grant cycles:

- **Cycle 1:** January 4th- February 15th (cycle closes at 5:00 p.m. CST)
- **Cycle 2:** April 19th- June 2nd (cycle closes at 5:00 p.m. CST)
- **Cycle 3:** August 2nd- Sept 13th (cycle closes at 5:00 p.m. CST)

Submitting Grant Applications

All grants must be submitted via our online grants application system https://www.cybergrants.com/centerpoint/CNPGives_EligibilityQuiz.

Due to the volume of grant applications we receive, each application is evaluated on a competitive basis as we strive to fund programs with strong impact and measurable outcomes within our funding priorities.

While CenterPoint Energy values our business relationships and takes tremendous pride in serving our communities, the Internal Revenue Service stipulates that the Foundation may not consider business relationships when making grant-award decisions in order to avoid self-dealing practices.

Any changes to the application process will be posted on www.centerpointenergy.com/CNPGives.

Funding Priorities

Our funding targets innovative, effective and measurable programs that enhance the quality of life within our communities and support the following giving pillars: **Community Vitality, Education, and Local Initiatives**. Priority consideration is given to programs that serve low- to moderate-income families and underrepresented populations. Consideration is also given to initiatives that focus on diversity and inclusion. Key focus areas within the giving pillars include:

Community Vitality

- *Community Catalyst* – Community Development initiatives leading to thriving neighborhoods, cities and states
- *Affordable Housing* – Initiatives leading to increased access to quality, affordable and energy-efficient housing
- *Environment* – Ensuring our communities are safe and green

Education

- *Quality Literacy Programs* – Early childhood through adult literacy and tutoring programs
- *STEM Programs* – STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) education programs targeted to under-resourced areas and/or underrepresented populations
- *Workforce Development* – Programs addressing needs of our communities

Local Initiatives

- *Local Collaborations* – Initiatives that enrich relationships and strengthen the communities in which we operate, and programs with high levels of employee engagement

CenterPoint Energy Charitable Giving Programs

The Community Relations staff administers the following *primary* charitable programs, which are detailed below. If approved for funding, all payments will be made electronically as outlined in more detail in one of the *Frequently Asked Questions*.

- **Foundation Grant**

This grant application is open to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that meet the eligibility requirements as outlined on the next page. Organizations must be located within our corporate footprint and carry out programs related directly to our funding priorities, mission and vision. Applicants should expect a waiting period of up to 90 days from submission to final decision making.

- **United Way Corporate Contributions**

Corporate contributions are made to United Ways in communities where CenterPoint Energy has a business presence. Employees are also encouraged to make personal donations through our annual workplace campaign.

- **Easy Match**

Easy Match (the company's matching gifts program) furthers CenterPoint Energy's charitable giving by matching employees' personal donations dollar-for-dollar up to \$5,000 per year to eligible 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations.

- **Volunteer Grants**

The Volunteer Grant program provides a grant to employees who volunteer 40 or more hours with a single 501(c)(3) non-profit in a calendar year.

- **Community Safety Grants**

In 2003, CenterPoint Energy started the Community Safety Grant program, providing matching grants to communities we serve for eligible safety and emergency response equipment.

To be considered for grant funding, organizations must:

- Be a nonprofit organization and have obtained recognition of tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) as a public charity under Code 509(a) and in good standing. (If an organization is exempt under Section 509(a)(3), it must be Type I or Type II.)
- Have their organization's primary address located within CenterPoint Energy's footprint.

What we look for in an applicant organization:

- Financial stability
- Mission closely related to the Foundation's priorities
- Strong leadership and governance
- Reflective of the community being served (Diverse board and staff; engaging clients in development, implementation and/or evaluation of programs)

When reviewing proposals, preference is given to funding opportunities/initiatives that:

- Fit closely with the Foundation’s funding priorities
- Address community needs related to our funding priorities
- Include financial commitments from a variety of sources
- Utilize an effective evaluation plan specific to the proposed funding opportunity/initiative
- Demonstrate measurable and sustainable goals and outcomes

Restrictions

The CenterPoint Energy Foundation does not provide grant funding for the items or organizations listed below.

Please note, this is not an exhaustive listing and additional restrictions may also apply.

School clubs/organizations, including, but not limited to bands, athletic or academic teams, booster clubs, PTO/PTA	Organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, or religion
Meals, tickets, dues, memberships, fees, travel, tuition, subscriptions, and other tangible benefits	Political, labor, military, international or fraternal organizations
Childcare fees/subsidies or K-12 tuition	Programs administered by religious organizations for religious purposes
Sponsorships, fundraisers, races, telethons, marathons, benefits, banquets, galas, golf tournaments, festivals, or other events	Debt retirement or funding of any activity that is already completed
Individuals	Contests, competitions, athletics, pageants, or talent contests
Scholarly or medical research	A 509(a)(3) Type III supporting organization charity
Endowments or scholarships	Previous grantees who have not submitted required reporting

Frequently Asked Questions

Please review the questions below for more information before starting an application.

1. Q: Are there deadlines for applying?

A: Yes. The deadlines for 2021 are below:

- **Cycle 1:** January 4th- February 15th (cycle closes at 5:00pm CST)
- **Cycle 2:** April 19th- June 2nd (cycle closes at 5:00pm CST)
- **Cycle 3:** August 2nd- Sept 13th (cycle closes at 5:00pm CST)

The system will not accept proposals after the closing date. We recommend you try logging into the system and work to submit your application prior to the application deadline to ensure you do not have any technical difficulties. If you need technical support, please contact cgsupport@cybergrants.com. **Please note, it may take up to 2 business days to receive a response.**

2. Q: Does my organization have to be located in an area served by CenterPoint Energy to receive a grant?

A: Foundation Grants are limited to organizations that have their primary address located in a community CenterPoint Energy serves. Consideration may be given to organizations who serve communities within CenterPoint Energy territory but are located outside of our service area. Please email cnpgives@centerpointenergy.com if this applies to your organization. A list of counties CenterPoint Energy serves is located in Appendix A attached to this document.

3. Q: Are nonprofits required to have a 501(c)(3) designation to apply?

A: Nonprofits applying for a Foundation grant must be tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) and recognized as a public charity under Code Section 509(a) and in good standing. (If an organization is exempt under Section 509(a)(3), it must be Type I or Type II.)

4. Q: My organization is a current grantee. Are we eligible to apply for additional funding?

A: If your organization has been awarded a grant or received a grant payment within the last 12 months, additional requests for funding will not be considered until after the grant period has ended and a final report has been submitted.

5. Q: Can I apply for both a grant and a sponsorship or multiple grants within the same calendar year or time period?

A: Yes, however, please note that due to the volume of requests received, we will take into consideration all commitments made per organization into our overall decision.

6. Q: Does the Foundation provide funding to daycare or childcare centers to subsidize the cost of tuition, fees, or other childcare related costs?

A: Unfortunately, families across our footprint are facing rising childcare costs. Due to limited resources and a desire to remain fair and equitable, we are unable to fund tuition assistance programs or other childcare related costs.

7. Q: Do you fund salaries and/or fringe benefits?

A: We consider requests for salaries, fringe benefits, and overhead on a case-by-case basis. Please email

us at cnpgives@centerpointenergy.com if you have further clarifying questions.

8. Q: What is the difference between a Foundation grant and an event sponsorship?

A: Foundation grants are provided to IRS designated 501 (c)(3) non-profit organizations. Grants are charitable donations used to fund general operating costs, program costs, and initiatives that are large in scope and impact, and other programmatic activities undertaken by nonprofit organizations.

Sponsorships are monetary contributions given in support of events or activities in exchange for advertising and/or publicity. These decisions are made at a regional level.

9. Q: Does CenterPoint Energy or the Foundation sponsor community-based events?

A: CenterPoint Energy prefers to fund nonprofit programs and projects, rather than fundraising events. We have limited funds available for local community events and give preference to events that fit within our focus areas. If you have additional questions about community event sponsorships, please contact CNPGives@centerpointenergy.com at least **90 days before your event**.

10. Q: May we submit more than one application at a time?

A: Yes. Priority will be given to the initial application. If a grant is awarded to an organization, existing funding will be considered when evaluating any additional application within the same grant cycle/calendar year.

11. Q: What is the process for applying for a grant?

A: The Foundation grant application is open to nonprofit organizations that are located within our corporate footprint and are seeking to carry out programs related directly to our funding priorities, mission, and vision. All applicants must submit their application via our online grant portal to be considered for funding. Applicants should expect a waiting period of up to 90 days from submission to final decision making.

12. Q: How do I apply?

A: Applications must be submitted online through the CenterPoint Energy website. Proposals are not accepted via email, postal mail, or fax.

13. Q: When does the Foundation board meet?

A: The Foundation board meets quarterly to make decisions on grant applications.

14. Q: What is an appropriate request amount for a Foundation grant?

A: The amount requested from the Foundation should be proportionate to your program goals, funding opportunity budget and expected income from other sources. Funding is ultimately contingent upon the initiative's alignment with the Foundation's priorities and funding availability from the Foundation's annual budget.

15. Q: What e-mail address should be used for the account?

A: When setting up your online account username and password for the application, please ensure the appropriate individual has access to the account. Impact reports and communication regarding grants will be emailed to the submitter and future funding will be contingent on the completion of all reports.

16. Q: I am locked out of my Cybergrants account, can you please reset my password?

A: We do not have access to any account information including passwords and log in credentials. Please contact Cyber Grants directly at cgsupport@cybergrants.com.

17. Q: Can I copy and paste information from a Word document into one of the application's text boxes?

A: You may copy and paste from an existing document; however, we recommend using a basic text editor such as Notepad, WordPad or TextEdit. Copying and pasting from Word or other programs may cause formatting errors or incorrect character counts in the application text boxes. We recommended reviewing your answer closely after you copy and paste text to check for these errors. You will also be able to upload attachments to the application in the final section.

18. Q: I do not have all the required documents in an electronic format. How do I submit them?

A: All documentation is required to be submitted in an electronic format with the application. Please scan the documents to create a PDF of your documents and attach them to your application.

19. Q: What is required of my organization if our application is approved?

A: All grant applications that are approved for funding will require the following:

- Signed Grant Agreement
- Payment will be made electronically via a third-party vendor (bill.com); if you cannot receive an electronic payment, you will have the option to request a paper check from the vendor
- Grant Reporting – an annual impact report will be required to be submitted electronically through your online account and is due within 30 days after the grant period is over.

Note: We have made some enhancements to our online grant applications with greater emphasis on measurable outcomes. These requirements are to be submitted in a timely manner. Overdue requirements can affect scheduled payments as well as future funding.

20. Q: In what form of communication will you notify my organization about our application?

A: Communications during the application process will be made primarily by email. Please add this email address (CNP Gives@CenterPointEnergy.com) to your contacts to receive all communications during the application process.

21. Q: What are some additional resources that I should consider if my organization/program may not be a good fit for the CNP Foundation?

A: The following resources may be helpful:

- Foundation Center – Find Funding – www.foundationcenter.org
- Grants Alert – www.grantsalert.com
- Chronicle of Philanthropy – www.philanthropy.com/grants

22. Q: What are tips for a complete application submission

A: Here are a few tips for a complete application submission

- Make sure you review each of the funding priorities and measurable outcomes prior to starting a new application. This will help you to determine which funding priority best fits your project or

initiative.

- Please read each question carefully to ensure all points are addressed.
- Make sure you upload your 501c3 exemption document and not your sales tax exemption document.
- If you have computer trouble, try the following steps – clear your cache, shut down your browser and reopen, try a different browser, and try to log in again.
- We suggest creating a group for your account so more than one person has access in case you have someone leave your organization.

For questions about the online application system and technical support, please contact cgsupport@cybergrants.com

For additional questions about the Foundation, giving priorities or giving cycles, please e-mail CNPgives@centerpointenergy.com.

Appendix A

List of Counties by State CenterPoint Energy Foundation Serves
(as of July 2021)

Arkansas Counties		
Arkansas	Garland	Ouachita
Ashley	Grant	Perry
Benton	Greene	Phillips
Bradley	Hempstead	Pike
Calhoun	Hot Spring	Poinsett
Chicot	Howard	Polk
Clark	Independence	Pope
Clay	Jackson	Prairie
Cleburne	Jefferson	Pulaski
Cleveland	Johnson	Randolph
Columbia	Lafayette	St. Francis
Conway	Lawrence	Saline
Craighead	Lee	Sebastian
Crawford	Lincoln	Sevier
Crittenden	Little River	Sharp
Cross	Logan	Union
Dallas	Lonoke	Van Buren
Desha	Miller	Washington
Drew	Mississippi	White
Faulkner	Monroe	Woodruff
Franklin	Montgomery	Yell
	Nevada	

Indiana Counties		
Bartholomew	Huntington	Rush
Blackford	Jay	Shelby
Boone	Jefferson	Spencer
Clark	Johnson	Tippecanoe
Clay	Knox	Tipton
Clinton	Lawrence	Vanderburgh
Daviess	Madison	Vermillion
Decatur	Martin	Vigo
Delaware	Monroe	Wabash
Floyd	Montgomery	Warren
Fountain	Morgan	Warrick
Gibson	Orange	Wayne
Grant	Parke	White
Hamilton	Pike	
Hancock	Posey	
Hendricks	Putnam	
Henry	Randolph	

Louisiana Counties		
Acadia	Grant	Sabine
Allen	Iberia	St Bernard
Ascension	Iberville	St Charles
Assumption	Jackson	St Helena
Avoyelles	Jefferson	St James
Beauregard	Jefferson Davis	St John the Baptist
Bienville	Lafayette	St Landry
Bossier	LaFourche	St Martin
Caddo	LaSalle	St Mary
Calcasieu	Lincoln	St Tammany
Caldwell	Livingston	Tangipahoa
Cameron	Madison	Tensas
Catahoula	Morehouse	Terrebonne
Claiborne	Natchitoches	Union
Concordia	Orleans	Vermillion
DeSoto	Ouachita	Vernon
East Baton Rouge	Plaquemines	Washington
East Carroll	Pointe Coupe	Webster
East Feliciana	Rapides	West Baton Rouge
Evangeline	Red River	West Carroll
Franklin	Richland	West Feliciana
		Winn

Minnesota Counties		
Anoka	Houston	Renville
Becker	Isanti	Rice
Blue earth	Kanabec	Rock
Brown	Kandiyohi	Scott
Carver	Le Sueur	Sherburne
Chippewa	Mcleod	Sibley
Chisago	Meeker	Stearns
Crow wing	Mille lacs	Steele
Dakota	Morrison	Stevens
Douglas	Nicollet	Swift
Faribault	Pipestone	Todd
Freeborn	Pope	Waseca
Goodhue	Ramsey*	Washington
Hennepin	Redwood	Watonwan
		Wright

* Please note, we do not serve the City of Saint Paul

Mississippi Counties		
Attala	Jefferson Davis	Perry
Bolivar	Jones	Pike
Chickasaw	Lafayette	Quitman
Clarke	Lamar	Rankin
Copiah	Lauderdale	Scott
Covington	Lawrence	Simpson
Forrest	Leake	Smith
George	Lincoln	Stone
Greene	Lowndes	Sunflower
Hancock	Madison	Tallahatchie
Harrison	Marion	Union
Hinds	Neshoba	Walthall
Issaquena	Newton	Warren
Jackson	Panola	Wayne
Jasper	Pearl River	Winston
		Yalobusha

Ohio Counties		
Auglaize	Fayette	Miami
Champaign	Highland	Montgomery
Clark	Kenton	Preble
Greene	Logan	Shelby
Clinton	Madison	Warren
Darke		Union

Oklahoma Counties		
Atoka	Greer	Okmulgee
Beckham	Haskell	Osage
Blaine	Hughes	Payne
Caddo	Jackson	Pittsburg
Coal	Kay	Pontotoc
Comanche	Latimer	Pottawatomie
Cotton	Le Flore	Roger Mills
Custer	Major	Seminole
Garfield	Marshall	Stephens
Garvin	McClain	Washita
Grady	McCurtain	Woodward
Grant	Okfuskee	

Texas Counties		
Anderson	Gregg	Nueces
Angelina	Guadalupe	Orange
Aransas	Hardin	Panola
Atascosa	Harris	Polk
Austin	Harrison	Rains
Bowie	Hays	Refugio
Bastrop	Hopkins	Rusk
Bee	Houston	San Augustine
Bexar	Jackson	San Jacinto
Brazoria	Jasper	San Patricio
Caldwell	Jefferson	Shelby
Calhoun	Jim Hogg	Smith
Camp	Jim Wells	Titus
Cass	Karnes	Travis
Chambers	Kleberg	Trinity
Cherokee	Lavaca	Tyler
Colorado	Lee	Upshur
Comal	Liberty	Van Zandt
DeWitt	Marion	Victoria
Duval	Matagorda	Walker
Fayette	Medina	Waller
Fort Bend	Montgomery	Webb
Franklin	Morris	Wharton
Galveston	Nacogdoches	Williamson
Goliad	North Montgomery	Wilson
		Wood