

Write a winning Missouri 4-H Foundation Community Service Grant application

This factsheet will help you write a winning application for the Missouri 4-H Foundation Community Service Grant.

1. Your community service project is appropriate when:

- **Youth are involved in determining a clearly demonstrated community need and in meeting it.** Examples: capital improvements for public parks and buildings; community gardens; 4-H One Million Trees projects; wildlife habitat.
- **The service-learning goals and objectives are clear and appropriate.** Projects that do not merely involve youth showing up and working as volunteers. 4-H leaders have identified the knowledge/skills youth will gain from the experience. Youth learn from and work with community volunteers who have professional or specialized skills.
- **The project improves the quality of life for a special-needs group or entire community.** Examples: disaster relief; serving at the food bank; making weighted blankets for kids with autism.
- **The applicants have established a community partnership.** Examples: renovating community buildings; building and maintaining park trails, community recycling drives.
- **We do not accept:** applications for projects such as fundraisers, 4-H events, annual flower gardens, 4-H marketing projects, flags or flag poles. We cannot grant funds to improve private property.

2. The most important part of a grant application is the budget. A winning grant budget always shows:

- **The budget is accurate.** A budget with mathematical errors will be disqualified.
- **Expenses are reasonable and expense receipts can be provided.** Examples: The applicant priced materials and supplies, and produced an accurate expense list. The budget includes a statement that receipts will be produced upon request.
- **Match funding is appropriate.** Match funds include labor, cash donations and in-kind donations of specialized equipment or services, such as the rental price of a front-end loader, or the standard hourly fee of an equipment operator. Using someone's hand tools is not an allowed match.
- **Labor estimates are accurate and are not inflated.** 4-H Community Service Grants allow for 100% match with youth labor. That being said, many community investments require skilled labor, which serves two purposes: provides a learning experience for youth, and ensures that the job will meet standards and codes. In some cases, adult labor can be used for part of the match.

3. You're not finished until you file a report! Bottom line: The Missouri 4-H Foundation must file annual reports with our funders. WE NEED YOUR REPORT WITHIN 30 DAYS OF COMPLETION OF YOUR PROJECT. Follow these tips for a winning report.

- **Your report is timely, original, accurate, and includes a statement that expense receipts will be produced upon request.** At the end of the fiscal year, we must prepare reports to our funders. We analyze ROI (Return on Investment) and cost-benefits. We show how many dollars the funder's community investment generated. So pay close attention to these instructions:

1. **Your report is due within 30 days of project completion.** If your project is delayed for any reason, email an update.
2. **Your check number is your Project Number.** Record the check number when you receive your check, so you have it ready for your report.
3. **DON'T copy and paste your application into the report.** We want to know what you actually did, not what you said you would do.
4. **Report all expenses.** Don't use estimates from the application. If you had different expenses than you expected, show it.
5. **State that you are prepared to produce all expense receipts.** If an expense raises a red flag, we'll request the price tag or receipt.
6. **If your expenses are less than the grant amount, send us a check for the balance.**
7. **List all matching donations and labor.** If more or fewer people than estimated actually participate in the service project, report the real number. Add those little extras: donated materials and services that "showed up" when you worked on the project.
8. **DO give credit to our funders!** The funder is Crader Distributing-Stihldealers.com. Thank them in your press releases and signage: "project was supported by the Missouri 4-H Foundation with funds from *Crader Distributing-Stihldealers.com.*"
9. **DO take action photos** and email .jpg files with your report. We send them to the grant funders. Try to capture youth in action, or before/after photos. Media coverage: Include any newspaper clippings or the link to Internet articles.