What is the Special Project Challenge Grant?

The Tahlequah Community Fund (TCF) offers periodically a Special Project Challenge Grant (SPCG) to assist nonprofit 501(c)(3) and local government entities (including public schools) in their efforts to serve special community needs. The SPCG is intended to provide funding that is dedicated to creating significant projects and other physical improvements that benefit the entire community.

The SPCG focuses on projects that directly engage residents and businesses in creating green spaces, gathering places, mini-parks, public art, and other community amenities. The SPCG will match 1:1 every dollar raised by the chosen organization and committed to a specific project, up to $50,000.

Why a Challenge Grant?

Challenge grants work. Donors are more willing to give and often willing to give more if their contributions are matched by other funds. Used wisely, not-for-profit agencies will find challenge grants an excellent tool to raise the funds necessary to complete projects.
The Tahlequah Community Fund - Special Project Challenge Grant (SPCG) process encourages projects in the following areas:

- Community development & revitalization
- Parks, recreation, & environmental enhancement
- Health & human services
- Youth & education

Nonprofit organizations serving the citizens of the Tahlequah, Oklahoma area are eligible to submit a Special Project Challenge Grant application.

GRANT AVAILABILITY STATUS: NOW OPEN TO APPLICATIONS

APPLICATION DEADLINE: *April 30, 2020*
Please note if the grant deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, the application is due the next business day by 9:00 a.m.

Special Project Challenge Grant (SPCG) Process:
Review SPCG grant guidelines carefully before applying.

All SPCG applications must be submitted to:
Tahlequah Community Fund
Attn: JD Carey – SPCG Project
401 S Water Ave.
Tahlequah, OK 74464

Please contact a TCF representative with any questions:
- JD Carey (918) 456-6665
- Jodeen Worth (918) 822-7643
- Ken Purdy (918) 931-7926

**Special Project Challenge Grant Guidelines**

**General:**
The project should benefit a significant need for infrastructure or other physical enhancement in the community. The applicant organization must exhibit the ability to raise the required matching funds. Coalitions or collaboratives are eligible to apply, but only one organization may receive the grant. The recipient organization must be capable of organizing and implementing the proposed project. Only cash contributions will be matched; future pledges and in-kind gifts do not meet the match requirement.
Areas of Interest:
The community fund encourages projects in the following areas (listed alphabetically):

- Community Development & Revitalization
- Health & Human Services
- Parks, Recreation, & Environment
- Youth & Education

Project Selection Criteria:

- Does the project plan address an identified community need?
- Is the plan thorough, realistic, and attainable within a reasonable time frame?
- Does the project use inclusive, collaborative and resourceful processes to pursue an innovative solution to a community challenge?
  - Inclusive: meaningfully engaging key stakeholders - thoughtfully identifying those needed to create the intended change and, whenever possible, including those directly affected by the problem.
  - Collaborative: a true joint effort with partners willing to share ownership and decision-making as they pursue an innovation together.
  - Resourceful: using existing resources and assets creatively to make the most of what a community already has.
  - Is the process likely to lead to a community innovation - a breakthrough in addressing a community need that is more effective, equitable or sustainable than existing approaches?
- Implementation: Does the applicant have the capacity to execute the work effectively or have a plan to meet the needed capacity?
- Impact: Is the project likely to make a significant, sustainable difference, now or in the future?
- Will the project inspire others to improve the community?

Required Application Attachments:

The following are required documents to be included in the online application:

- Detailed project plan with design elements and completion timeframe(s) as appropriate. *(NOTE: Project completion within 12 months is strongly encouraged. On a limited basis, SPCG projects may exceed 12 months based on complexity and scope, subject to pre-approval by the Tahlequah Community Fund board of directors.)*
- Detailed project budget (Include revenue and expense sources for proposed project only).
- Current board roster with officers identified.
• Annual financial statement (e.g., Compiled financial statement or IRS Report- Form 990) for the most recently completed fiscal year (audited if available).
• IRS determination Letter. (Only required if not yet on file. Hard copy can be mailed to TCF if scanned document not available for e-mail.)

NOTE: It is the responsibility of the grant-seeking organization to submit a complete application. Incomplete requests run the risk of being declined without consideration. The letters of request will be reviewed by the TCF Grants Committee and outstanding requests will be identified for further consideration. Site visits will be conducted at the grants committee’s discretion. Agencies may be asked to submit additional information.

Notification and Announcement:
Challenge grant applications will be reviewed by TCF’s Board of Directors within 60 days following the grant application deadline. Applicants are informed immediately thereafter regarding the status of their request. Announcement of the special project and grant award will be made by the Community Fund. The chosen organization will have 12 months to meet pre-negotiated matching requirements. All grant awards are made at the discretion of TCF and the right is reserved by TCF to make no awards following submission of applications.

Will Grants be Evaluated?
Yes. Grants will be evaluated to verify successful completion of the project as defined in the grant proposal and compliance with any conditions made at the time of the grant. Excellent evaluations will enhance the credibility of the recipient organization and their subsequent grant requests. The reverse is also true. Failure to carry out successfully the objectives detailed in your grant proposal may compromise your chances for additional funding.

What are the Priorities of the Community Fund?
The Board has defined as the role and priorities of the Community Fund:
• To encourage community improvement projects that broadly benefit residents of the Tahlequah area.
• To assist existing agencies to better respond to the needs of the community.
• To maintain both a proactive focus for grants dollars and the ability to respond to creative ideas from grant seekers.
• To promote innovative, collaborative efforts to improve the well-being of the Tahlequah community and its residents.
• To encourage programs that enhance cooperation and collaboration among public-interest organizations within the area.
What will the Community Fund Generally Not Fund?
While the TCF remains flexible in trying to meet community needs, in general, grants are not made to fund:

- Operating support for established programs.
- Funding of endowment campaigns.
- Religious organizations for religious purposes.
- Individuals directly.
- Development or public relations activities (e.g. literature, videos, etc.).
- Phased projects.
- Retirement of debts.
- Annual appeals or membership contributions.
- Travel for bands, sports teams, classes, etc.
- Computers (unless presented as a necessary component of larger program or objective).
- Post-event or after-the-fact situations.