Request for Grant Proposals

Fostering Social Connection in Later Life

Paul and Alma Schwan Aging Trust Endowment Fund

Loneliness and social isolation in older adults are serious public health risks affecting a significant number of people in our communities, putting them at risk for dementia and other serious medical conditions.

Approximately one-quarter of Americans aged 65 and older are considered socially isolated, and a significant proportion of adults in the United States report feeling lonely. People who are 50 years of age or older are more likely to experience many of the risk factors that can cause or exacerbate social isolation or loneliness, such as living alone, the loss of family or friends, chronic illness and sensory impairments.

Social isolation refers to a lack of connections to family, friends or community, which can lead to loneliness, or feelings of being alone regardless of the amount of social contact. A third of adults over 65 and half over 85 live alone, contributing to higher rates of loneliness. Older adults are at increased risk of loneliness, which can increase the risk of heart disease, dementia, stroke, anxiety, and depression.

We see this profound negative impact on physical and mental health outcomes in the short and long term. In contrast, fostering social connection in later life means older adults can continue to thrive and be valued members of our communities.

Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF) has created a grant program to support projects that provide southwest Minnesota-serving organizations with funding to reduce and prevent social isolation and loneliness among older adults in our region.

Area of Focus

These grants will invest in **coordination of activities and/or direct interventions to improve connections for southwest Minnesotans aged 65 and older through social supports, enhanced interactions, or adaptive cognition.** Examples could include connection to socialization opportunities, meaning making and volunteer programs, online and physical program coordination or caregiver support. SWIF has allocated a total of $150,000 for individual grant awards ranging from $500 to $20,000 (one-year term).

The grant application deadline is **5 p.m. on October 31, 2025.**

SOUTHWEST INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

CFNS ACCREDITED FOUNDATION

Confirmed in Compliance with National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations

15 3rd Avenue NW | Hutchinson, MN 55350 | 800-594-9480 or 320-587-4848 | www.swifoundation.org

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Process and Criteria

The Southwest Initiative Foundation encourages groups with diverse cultures, philosophies, and experiences as welcome partners in this effort. SWIF commits that its grantmaking activities reflect and promote the diversity of the communities we serve.

Application Process

- Applicants must complete the grant application at: https://swifoundation.tfaforms.net/wfbzX7W
- You will receive an email confirming our receipt of your application.
- The grant deadline is **5 p.m. on October 31, 2025.**
- If there are questions related to your application, a member of our grant team will contact you.
- You will be informed of the decision by mid-December.
- Southwest Initiative Foundation reserves the right to make modifications to the program in response to community need and available resources.

Grant Guidelines

- All proposals must demonstrate a benefit within one or more of the following 18 counties in southwest Minnesota: Big Stone, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, McLeod, Meeker, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, Rock, Swift and Yellow Medicine; or the Upper Sioux Community or Lower Sioux Indian Community.
- Proposals must be submitted by an independent 501(c)(3) organization, a unit of government, religious institution or educational entity.
- **Funding requests of up to $20,000 will be considered**; matching funds are encouraged. Additional funds may be awarded, dependent upon availability.
- Projects must be completed within 12 months of the grant award date.
- Only one grant application may be submitted per organization.
- A final report may be due following the grant period.

Grant Exclusions — Ineligible organizations or activities include:

- Individuals, businesses or other for-profit organizations
- Specific religious purposes or activities
- Capital funding campaigns or endowments
- Funds for re-granting

This is a competitive grant process, with highest consideration being given to projects that:

- Reflect a community-centered effort, with the voice of the community apparent in the solution.
- Use an approach grounded in the capacity that exists in the responding body.
- Align with the other constructs in community, natural cohesion and partnerships.
- Connect the individual to a confidant, family and friends and/or community.
- Enhance the resources the individual brings to the experience, with an emphasis on their strengths, the importance of being able to contribute to others and the opportunity to give and receive.
- Employ cross-cultural adaptations and focus on connecting elders, who are more likely to be isolated and less likely to have the resource to connect. This could include technology, programs, outer- circle relationships, language and transportation.