

# 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 was a growing problem in American society well before the COVID-19 pandemic. A third of older adults over 65 and half over 85 live alone, contributing to higher rates of loneliness—linked to increased cases of depression, cognitive decline and other serious health problems. As we were all urged to physically distance for our own protection and that of our neighbors, older adults saw their social lifelines disappear.

We see this having a 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 people's connections through social supports, enhanced interactions, or adaptive cognition**. Examples could include connection to opportunities, meaning making and volunteer programs, online and physical program coordination or caregiver support. SWIF has allocated a total of \$250,000 for individual grant awards ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000 (one-year term).

**The grant application deadline is 5 p.m. on October 31, 2023.**



**SOUTHWEST INITIATIVE  
FOUNDATION**

15 3rd Avenue NW | Hutchinson, MN 55350 | 800-594-9480 or 320-587-4848 | [www.swifoundation.org](http://www.swifoundation.org)



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## Process and Criteria

The Southwest Initiative Foundation encourages to groups with diverse cultures, philosophies, and experiences that they are welcome partners in its efforts. SWIF will seek grantees and partners that incorporate diversity into their missions and strive to encourage diverse governance boards, partner organizations and those impacted. 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/4762082>
- You will receive an email confirming our receipt of your application.
- The grant deadline is **5 p.m. on October 31, 2023**.
- 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 \$50,000 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 alignment and partnerships.
- Connect the person to a confidant, family and friends and/or community.
- Enhance the resources the person 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 BIPOC 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.