

Values Aligned Philanthropy Policy

Purpose: to demonstrate how we use our values to guide all of our grant making.

Mission: We bring people and resources together to build a more equitable Tompkins County by inspiring diverse philanthropy, catalyzing collaborations and championing inclusion and justice.

Vision: Tompkins County thrives thanks to engaged philanthropy.

Values:

Community

Engagement

Integrity

Racial Equity

Relationships

Social Justice

For nearly twenty-five years, Community Foundation of Tompkins County has been a catalyst for values-based philanthropy. As one of the key funding organizations supporting a wide array of non-profits and service agencies in our area, we not only educate our community on the importance and impact of private gift support, but we also provide the means for directly addressing community needs, all while championing the principles of inclusion and justice.

As a community foundation, it is our obligation to you to respond to the growing concern about the issue of funding hate and extremism. Part of our responsibility is to provide all donors with opportunities to gain experience and to practice philanthropy which prevents support of hate and activities which increase suffering, especially in marginalized communities surviving from generations of compounded trauma.

To this end, we honor the fundamental value and dignity of all members of our community and will not support, fund, or engage with organizations (through donor-advised recommendations or any other grantmaking processes) that attack or dehumanize people and communities based on race, color, religion, gender, immigration status, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation (this list is non-exhaustive). These activities are contrary to our mission.

The goal is not to police the funding choices of our donors or those who establish funds with us, but to lean into the action to transform the practice of philanthropy. Donors, of course, with their individual actions without Community Foundation involvement, retain the right to make gifts to any eligible organization. There are some grants which Community Foundation will not make. We commit to have values aligned with all the philanthropy which engages with the Community Foundation. We do this with the goal of building strong communities and better outcomes for all.

We rely on the Internal Revenue Services and the NYS Charities Bureau to regulate the charitable status of organizations. For all potential grants and awards by Community Foundation, staff will be responsible for conducting due diligence reviews of all recommended grantees/applicants. No funding recommendations will be made for organizations that promote hate, racism, intimidation, harassment, or violence. Final decisions for specific grants and awards by the Community Foundation will rest with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and board of directors. This policy does not 'determine' the philanthropic interests of the foundation; instead, it offers a guide for making well-informed decisions that facilitate meaningful discussions and clear explanations.

Procedure:

- This policy will be given to potential donor advisors or fund representatives as the fund establishment process is being finalized.
- Organizations which have had grant recommendations made to them are carefully reviewed by community engagement staff to ensure charitable status and eligibility through commonly utilized databases and to ensure consistency with existing foundation policies and procedures. Staff will flag any questionable grant recommendation or potential organization deemed inconsistent with foundation policies and grantmaking values.
- Staff will research the organization and decide if further discretion is warranted.
- Information will then be provided to the CEO.
- The CEO will make a recommendation to the full board on whether the proposed grant or fund establishment is consistent with foundation policies and values.
- If the board does not take action the CEO will have authority to approve or to decline the grant and/or fund establishment.
- Staff will then communicate the final decision and reason for the decision to the donor or potential fund representative.
- If a grant is to be made, then the grantee must complete a grant agreement which includes attestations for non-discrimination.