

Community Betterment Matching Grant Applications

Policy Statement

The Masonic Charitable Foundation of the Grand Lodge of Maine now has four matching fund programs by which it matches funds contributed by a Lodge or raised by a Lodge up to Five Hundred Dollars. These four programs are the Masonic Bikes for Books program, Project Graduation, Youth Activities and Community Betterment. The first three are fairly specific. The fourth, Community Betterment, has been used for a variety of projects selected by the Lodges.

There have recently been a number of applications which involve little more than writing a check and sending it to another organization to help finance one of its projects. In almost every case, these have been good and worthwhile activities but they do not meet the purpose of our matching grant program.

The goal of the Foundation in its Community Betterment Matching Fund Program is to support Lodges by providing encouragement and some financial assistance to help them accomplish projects which will better the communities in which they are located, provide opportunities for Masons to work together and give the Lodges greater visibility in the communities where they are located.

The Foundation wants to encourage Lodges to be creative in identifying projects in their own communities and in devising ways to accomplish those projects. Consequently there are no fixed rules or criteria. That being said, an application is strong if:

1. The project is a Lodge project rather than some other organization's project;
2. The public sees that the Lodge is an active party in accomplishing the project.
3. The project involves more than simply sending a check;
4. The Lodge raises its share of the funds by a public fund raiser;
5. A significant number of Masons are contributing their own time to the project;
6. Members of the public are contributing time to the project;
7. The project is of benefit to the whole community.
8. The matching funds are used in the community.

Conversely, an application is weaker to the extent that any of these factors are absent or minimal. Where one or more of the above factors are weak, the other factors should be very strong. In the future, the Foundation is going to take a closer look at the Community Betterment Grant applications and fund only those where the above factors or most of them are strongly represented.