



2026

Request for Proposals

PURPOSE

At the Harvest Foundation, we deeply value community engagement as a cornerstone of our strategic planning and decision-making, ensuring that community voices are heard and empowered. Rooted in our mission, we collaborate with the diverse residents and organizations of Martinsville and Henry County to foster a welcoming environment for all. Our core values guide our efforts, reinforcing our commitment to walking this journey together. By building genuine relationships, we honor the expertise and strengths of our community, driving us toward our North Star: creating an MHC where everyone envisions a bright and promising future.

Project Hope began as a celebration of The Harvest Foundation's 20th anniversary and has since grown into an initiative that empowers the community to apply for grants and participate in the decision-making process for grant funding.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Community groups, grassroots organizations, and residents with bold ideas are encouraged to apply. Project Hope is designed to support ideas that are created *by* community members *together* and that will impact the broader community – not individual projects or individual needs.

Whether you're a neighborhood group, a nonprofit, a faith group, or a group of residents who have come together around a shared idea, we welcome applicants who are committed to creating positive change within their communities.

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1. About The Harvest Foundation

The Harvest Foundation is a private foundation focused on place-based investments in the rural communities of Martinsville City and Henry County, Virginia. We envision a community where everyone shares in the promise of a Martinsville/Henry County (MHC) that is healthy, prosperous, and vibrant. The Foundation, in partnership with the diverse people and organizations that call MHC home, serves as a long-term catalyst, advocate, and investor to make our community a welcoming place where all can thrive. Since its establishment in 2002, Harvest has committed more than \$250 million through more than 500 grants to local nonprofits and municipalities.

Our current five-year Strategic Plan is guided by our North Star of Hope and focuses on building thriving youth, a vibrant community, and a resilient and diverse economy to improve education, economic vitality, and civic capacity for community revitalization.

While grantmaking is an important aspect of the work, Harvest uses other platforms to advance our overall vision of community transformation. These include:

- Convening & Facilitating – We bring people together and support collaborative processes that lead to impact.
- Connecting – We connect public and private sectors with communities to create solutions and solve problems.
- Learning – We support shared learning so that we all have the knowledge and skills to constructively engage and collectively act.
- Catalyzing – We build momentum and spark action to bring community ideas to life. We work to renew the social fabric of our community and commitment to the common good.
- Investments – We make financial investments in community-driven projects and initiatives that align with the Foundation’s strategic objectives.

2. Purpose Overview & Background

Strong communities don't just happen—they're built through relationships.

When people show up and engage, something powerful happens. Trust grows. Connections form. Opportunities expand. These networks of relationships—often called *social capital*—are what help people find jobs, hear about housing, get recommendations, solve problems, and build friendships. More simply put: it's who we know, how we help each other, and how we work together that makes a community stronger.

At The Harvest Foundation, we believe our greatest strengths already exist within Martinsville–Henry County. The ideas, leadership, creativity, faith communities, neighborhood groups, and everyday residents—these are the real assets of our community.

The question isn't "What do we lack?" It's "What do we already have—and how can we build on it?"

Grassroots and community groups play a vital role in bringing people together. They are often the ones neighbors already trust. They understand local challenges because they live them. And they are uniquely positioned to turn small ideas into meaningful impact.

Through this funding opportunity, The Harvest Foundation is investing in community-led ideas that spark hope, increase volunteerism, and strengthen connections. We want to support projects that reflect the voices and priorities of local residents—projects that bring people together, build pride, and create positive momentum.

The Project Hope Committee—made up of 13 Martinsville and Henry County residents—reviews and recommends small, grassroots projects that encourage engagement and build hope. By placing community members at the center of decision-making, we ensure that local voices help shape where resources go.

The Committee will review all proposals and make recommendations to Foundation staff, who will make final funding decisions in alignment with Harvest's guidelines.

3. Project Goals

Project Hope is about neighbors working with neighbors.

The Project Hope 2026 Committee is seeking innovative, grassroots ideas that create connections and engage the community for a shared purpose. Grants of up to \$15,000 are available to support projects that:

- Are created collaboratively
- Engage multiple community members in implementation
- Address issues that affect the broader community, not individual circumstances

The projects should be able to be implemented within one year and not require ongoing financial support. The committee will be looking for a diverse group of projects that are spread throughout MHC and include a diverse group of community members.

Proposals should also address how the community members were engaged in the creation of the project and how they will be involved in the implementation.

The Committee hopes to accomplish the following:

- Plant seeds of hope in Martinsville-Henry County for the future, and develop opportunities to strengthen relationships among neighbors who come together to create a better future for themselves.
- Build grassroots communities through volunteerism and engagement by funding small projects that have an immediate impact.
- Create accessibility to The Harvest Foundation for small, grassroots organizations that typically may not apply for Harvest grants.
- Bring greater awareness of The Harvest Foundation to the overall community for those who may not be familiar with the foundation's work.

Funds may not be used for personal property improvements, budget shortfalls, or individual stipends/salaries. Individual-led projects will not be considered for funding.

Applications must be submitted by a group of at least three (3) people who are working together to design and carry out the project.

4. Submission Requirements & Eligibility

The application to submit this RFP can be found here:
theharvestfoundation.org/project-hope

We ask applicants to submit a 1-3 minute video to further illustrate your project/program to the funding committee. (*See Appendix II for tips to create your video*)

Eligibility:

- Entities that are recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)3 charitable organization, political subdivision, or governmental organization eligible for charitable contributions under the Internal Revenue Code
- Entities that are not recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)3 charitable organization are still eligible to apply with a fiscal sponsor. Such entities include community groups who, through volunteerism and community engagement, will undertake small projects with immediate impact.
 - The fiscal sponsor must be an entity recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)3 charitable organization, political subdivision, or governmental organization eligible for charitable contributions under the Internal Revenue Code

5. Funding & Budget

The Harvest Foundation Board of Directors approved \$100,000 for funding all projects/programs for Project Hope 2026. Applicants are encouraged to apply for projects and programs of all sizes. Committee members will consider proposals up to \$15,000 and review each project's budget to determine appropriate funding.

6. Timeline & Reporting

May 1, 2026 – Request for Proposals (RFP) Released / Application opens

July 31, 2026 – Applications Due

September 14, 2026 – Notification to Applicants

October 8, 2026 - Project Hope Celebration

Recipients will be responsible for a single report due 30 days following the program/project's completion. Each recipient will be assigned to a Program Officer to guide them throughout the process.

Got an idea you'd love to share? Have questions about the application or process? Join us at our *Latte & Listen* sessions at The Ground Floor—enjoy a free drink and connect one-on-one with a Program Officer!

Latte & Listen (at The Ground Floor)

May 19, 2026 @ 5 p.m. - 6 p.m.

May 20, 2026 @ 9 a.m. - 10 a.m.

May 21, 2026 @ 12 p.m. - 1 p.m.

July 7, 2026 @ 5 p.m. - 6 p.m.

July 8, 2026 @ 9 a.m. - 10 a.m.

July 9, 2026 @ 12 p.m. - 1 p.m.

Want to learn about past and current funded Project Hope grants? Stop by our *Project Hope Mixer* for the chance to connect with and learn from Project Hope recipients!

Project Hope Community Mixer (Gravelly-Lester Art Garden)

May 23, 2026 @ 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

7. Main Contact

India Brown

Program Officer

ibrown@theharvestfoundation.org

(276) 632-3329 ext. 112

Appendix I: Guidance for New Applicants

There are several steps to develop a project. The guidance below provides a general breakdown of the steps needed to develop a successful project. Applicants are always welcome to contact The Harvest Foundation for assistance with any of these steps.

EXPLORE

- TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PRE-APPLICATION SUPPORT OR ATTEND A GRANT FUNDAMENTALS SESSION TO EXPLORE IDEAS AND FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE APPLICATION PROCESS.
- CONTACT A PROGRAM OFFICER AND GET FEEDBACK ON YOUR POTENTIAL PROJECT OR PROGRAM.

READ

- READ THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS THOROUGHLY, MAKING SURE TO HIGHLIGHT PROJECT GOALS AND ELIGIBILITY.
- IDENTIFY A NEED IN THE COMMUNITY.
- BRAINSTORM POTENTIAL "HOPE BUILDING" PROJECTS.

PARTNER

- IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO MAKE MEANINGFUL CHANGE. INVITE AND INVOLVE OTHERS TO HELP MAKE THE PROJECT A SUCCESS.
- ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY. BRAINSTORM WAYS TO RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS.

PLAN

- SET A GOAL. WHAT DO YOU WANT THIS PROJECT TO ACHIEVE AND WHY?
- DEVELOP A TIMELINE. HOW AND WHEN WILL THE PROJECT BE IMPLEMENTED?
- MEASURE SUCCESS. WHAT CHANGE(S) CAN BE RECOGNIZED AS A RESULT OF THE PROJECT?

BUDGET

- BE SPECIFIC. A WELL-PLANNED BUDGET SHOULD BE AS CONCRETE AS POSSIBLE.
- MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO BE REALISTIC AND ESTIMATE COSTS ACCURATELY.
- USE THE TEMPLATE PROVIDED.

Ready to submit? Be sure to review your application and budget before submitting.

Questions? Contact the Harvest Foundation for assistance!

Appendix II: Video Submission Tips

Your video submission is an opportunity you can use to further illustrate your project/program and how it will positively impact communities in Martinsville-Henry County.

It does not have to be a big production. A 1-3 minute selfie video (or it can be filmed by another person) should include:

- 1) Your introduction (name, title)
- 2) Description of your project
- 3) Any visuals (the place where your project/program will take place, a look at the volunteers), etc.
- 4) The impact your project will have on communities in Martinsville-Henry County
- 5) Other information you think will be relevant to the project selection committee

Your phone includes basic editing tools if you need them to trim down the length of your video. It should not exceed 3 minutes.

[Here's an example of what your video could look like.](#)

Tips on Recording:

1. Face the light and keep your smartphone above eye level
2. Record outside or in a well-lit area
3. If you have one, use a selfie stick!
4. You don't need a script but think about what you want to say before you hit record. It's harder than you think.
5. Use the editing tools on your phone to trim your video if needed.
6. Email lhodges@theharvestfoundation.org if you have any questions or concerns about submitting your video.

Appendix III: Past Project Examples

Past projects funded through this grant program include :



MHC TRASH PANDAS

Community-Led Cleanups and Environmental Education Initiatives



HEALTHY HEARTS LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

Community garden development and health/wellness education in the Fieldale community



MARTINSVILLE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

Youth-led movie and game nights at Baldwin Park.



SPENCER RURITAN CLUB

Renovation of the Spencer ball field for community use.

Appendix IV: Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a grassroots organization?

A grassroots organization is a community-driven group that operates at a local or regional level, often relying on volunteers and minimal formal structure. These organizations focus on social change, advocacy, or providing services, typically emerging from the needs and concerns of the people they serve.

2. I've never written a grant before, will there be someone to help?

Yes, the program staff at The Harvest Foundation are available to guide applicants through the grant process and provide technical assistance with the online grants system.

Dan River Nonprofit Network will serve as a thought partner, providing guidance on project content and support with templates and resources to strengthen the grant proposal. Contact sheri@danrivernonprofits.org for more information.

If you have any questions or need assistance, don't hesitate to reach out for support.

3. What is a fiscal sponsor?

A fiscal sponsor is an established nonprofit organization that provides financial and administrative oversight for another project or group that lacks its own tax-exempt status. This allows the sponsored project to receive grants and donations under the sponsor's nonprofit status.

To find a fiscal sponsor, research local nonprofit organizations. Meet with the organizations to propose a formal agreement outlining roles, responsibilities, and fees.

4. Can I apply to fund a project that is already being implemented?

No, Project Hope funding is for new projects that will benefit the community.

5. How can I strengthen my application?

Emphasize Collaboration – Projects that involve partnerships with other community members and organizations are highly valued. Demonstrating broad community engagement can enhance your proposal.

Ensure Community-Wide Benefit – Proposals should address needs that benefit the entire community, not just select individuals or groups. Clearly articulate the widespread impact of your project.

Set a Clear and Realistic Deadline – Establish a timeline that is achievable and aligns with the project's goals. A well-structured plan increases the likelihood of success.

Create a Realistic Budget – Ensure that your budget reflects the true costs of the project while being reasonable and justified. Clearly outline how funds will be used.

If you have questions, contact the Program Staff at The Harvest Foundation for guidance.

6. How do I access the application?

Visit www.theharvestfoundation.org/project-hope/ to access the Project Hope application.