



Northwestern Illinois Area Agency on Aging

Northwestern Illinois Area Agency on Aging (NIAAA)

Community Capacity Grant Program Guidelines

1. Purpose of the Grant

The **NIAAA Community Capacity Grant Program** is designed to strengthen the aging services network across the nine-county service area by supporting **one-time investments in infrastructure, technology, and program capacity**.

This funding is intended to:

- Enhance service delivery efficiency and reach
 - Improve access to services for older adults (age 60+) and caregivers
 - Address identified service gaps (e.g., rural access, social isolation, technology barriers)
 - Build long-term organizational capacity—not ongoing operational costs
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2. Total Funding Available

- **Total Annual Allocation:** \$15,000
 - **Maximum Award per Applicant:** \$5,000
 - **Funding Period Cap:**
 - Each organization may receive **no more than \$5,000 total within any consecutive three-year period**
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3. Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be a **non-profit organization (501(c)(3) or an entity that serves older adults**
- Provide services that **directly benefit older adults (60+) and/or caregivers** within NIAAA's service area:
 - Boone
 - Carroll
 - DeKalb
 - Jo Daviess
 - Lee
 - Ogle
 - Stephenson
 - Whiteside
 - Winnebago
- Demonstrate alignment with **Older Americans Act (OAA)** priorities and NIAAA Area Plan goals



4. Allowable Use of Funds

Funds may be used for **non-recurring, capacity-building investments**, including but not limited to:

Technology

- Client management systems (e.g., data tracking, scheduling software)
- Hardware (computers, tablets, communication devices)
- Telehealth or virtual engagement tools

Infrastructure / Capital Improvements

- Facility upgrades that improve accessibility (ADA compliance, safety modifications)
- Equipment purchases (non-consumable)
- Space improvements that expand service capacity

Program Enhancement

- One-time program start-up costs
 - Evidence-based program materials
 - Outreach infrastructure (non-recurring)
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5. Non-Allowable Expenses

Grant funds **may NOT** be used for:

- Salaries, wages, or fringe benefits
 - Ongoing operational expenses (rent, utilities, routine maintenance)
 - Debt reduction or reimbursement of past expenses
 - Lobbying or political activities
 - Supplanting existing federal or state funding
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6. Funding Limitations & Structure

- Organizations **may apply annually**, but:
 - Total funding **cannot exceed \$5,000 within any rolling three-year period**



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- Partial awards may be issued at the discretion of NIAAA's Board of Directors
 - NIAAA reserves the right to:
 - Adjust award amounts
 - Prioritize first-time applicants or underserved counties
 - Ensure equitable geographic distribution across all nine counties
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7. Application Requirements

Applicants must submit:

1. **Organizational Information**
 - Mission, service area, and population(s) served
 2. **Project Description**
 - Clear explanation of the proposed investment
 - Identified need and target population(s)
 3. **Budget**
 - Detailed itemized budget (quotes encouraged)
 - Identification of any matching or leveraged funds
 4. **Impact Statement**
 - How the investment will improve service delivery
 - Number of older adults/caregivers impacted
 - Alignment with NIAAA priorities (e.g., social isolation, transportation, caregiver support)
 5. **Sustainability Plan**
 - How the investment will be maintained beyond the grant period
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8. Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- **Alignment with NIAAA priorities and Area Plan goals**
- **Demonstrated community need**, particularly for:



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- Rural populations
 - Low-income individuals
 - Minority and underserved populations
 - **Impact and scalability**
 - **Organizational capacity to implement the project**
 - **Cost-effectiveness and sustainability**
 - **Geographic distribution across counties**
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9. Reporting Requirements

Awardees must:

- Submit a **final report within 60 days** of project completion including:
 - Description of how funds were used
 - Outcomes and measurable impact
 - Photos or documentation (if applicable)
 - Participate in NIAAA outreach efforts (e.g., highlighting funded projects)
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10. Timeline (Example Framework)

- Application Release: May 5, 2026
 - Application Deadline: July 31, 2026
 - Award Notification: by September 1, 2026
 - Project Completion Deadline: August 30, 2027
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11. Additional Considerations

- Priority may be given to projects that:
 - Address **identified regional gaps** (transportation, social isolation, caregiver support, technology access)
 - Leverage partnerships within the aging network
 - Expand access in **underserved or rural areas**



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- This is a **competitive grant process**; funding is not guaranteed
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12. Contact Information

For questions or technical assistance:

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