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**Community Investment Fund**

**What is the Rural Institute for Inclusive Communities?**

The University of Montana Rural Institute has promoted equal opportunity for people with disabilities since 1978. We partner with advocates and communities to serve, train, research, develop and evaluate services that improve the quality of life of people with disabilities, including their families and those who serve and support them.

**What is the Community Investment Fund?**

The Community Investment Fund is a small pot of money (up to $4000 in 2024, which may be divided between several recipients) that the Rural Institute has made available for inclusive, innovative projects or programs that will help people with disabilities live, learn, work and play in their communities alongside people without disabilities.

**Who is eligible to apply for funding?**

Any Montana organization, agency, non-profit group, or individual with a creative idea developed by/with people with disabilities to promote community inclusion (people with disabilities participating together alongside people without disabilities) is eligible to apply. Please note that inclusion is the most important thing that reviewers look for in the CIF applications.

Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to view the YouTube CIF overview video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrm9B1tqEqQ>, as well as the March 1, 2016 “What’s the Buzz about Inclusion?” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7eV7CXieUVA>) and/or the January 24, 2017 “Inclusion: We All Benefit” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMrwmK8F-4Q>) archived webinars prior to applying.

**How does someone apply for funding?**

To apply, fill out the Community Investment Fund application and submit it by the deadline. Applications are available in hard copy and online formats, and may be mailed, emailed or faxed to the Rural Institute.

**When is the application deadline?**

For the 2024 funding cycle, the application deadline is May 15, 2024, Applicants will receive notice of funding decisions by July 15, 2024. Successful applicants will receive half of their award amount up front and the other half once their project is completed and their final report submitted and approved.

**When does the funding need to be spent?**

Community Investment Funds must be spent by December 15, 2024.

**What are the follow-up requirements after someone has received funding?**

Successful applicants must turn in a follow-up report describing how the money was spent, how many people with and without disabilities participated/were served, and how the project impacted the lives of people with and without disabilities.

**Who can be contacted for more information?**

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