



Altria Companies Employee Community Fund Focus Areas for Grantmaking

Learn about ACECF Focus Areas

The focus areas that will receive funding reflect the interests and concerns of employees. ACECF has conducted research in each funding area to address community needs. The focus areas have been recently updated and we recommend you review them in full prior to beginning your grant application.

Please note that we recognize many social challenges are interrelated with one another. We welcome applications for programs that coordinate services across two or more of the following focus areas. Please apply in the most relevant category, while highlighting connections to other focus areas as appropriate.

Domestic and Family Violence

Assisting and empowering persons (adults, children, and teens) who have been abused or threatened (including physical, sexual, psychological, or economic abuse) by an intimate partner or someone with whom they have or had a close relationship.

Examples:

- Promote prevention and safety by offering education along with counseling, awareness and safety planning programs to the general public
- Increase domestic violence crisis services, including improved access to health care, mental health care, hotlines, shelters and emergency services
- Provide training and ongoing educational opportunities to domestic and family violence professionals, to support their professional growth and maximize their impact
- Educate law enforcement, health professionals, clergy and educators in recognizing the signs of abuse and violence and how best to assist victims
- Provide advocacy and legal services to ensure appropriate handling of domestic violence cases in the criminal justice system
- Increase after-shelter follow-up services (including case management) to ensure clients' longer-term stability
- Promote self-sufficiency for survivors through life skills, financial literacy, and/or job skills training programs
- Educate abusers to prevent future incidents of domestic violence. All abuser education programs should meet best practices designed to ensure victim safety (for instance, not requiring couples counseling or contact of any kind with the victim).
- Promote community-based solutions to prevention, education and care

Emergency Services

Provide relief, recovery and preparedness services that address conditions of urgent need for action or assistance arising from acute medical emergencies, fires, natural disasters and man-made disasters. Note that this includes addressing emergency needs of active duty military persons, reservists and veterans and their families.





Examples:

- Provide emergency relief services to victims of disaster, such as medical treatment, food, clothing, emergency shelter, and other language and culturally appropriate services
- Support recovery efforts to follow the immediate relief activities, such as identifying long-term housing and securing the resources necessary for survivors to return to ordinary life
- Offer counseling and mental health services for those impacted by emergency situations
- Increase the development and availability of prevention programs and services, for fire safety and injury prevention, as well as disaster preparedness
- Increase the availability of equipment and training opportunities for readiness in acute medical emergency situations, fires, and natural disasters
- Increase the amount of resources available to recruit, train, and retain volunteers that respond to acute medical emergencies, fires, and natural disasters
- Meet the day-to-day needs of military families in crisis, including transportation, counseling, financial assistance, meals, communications assistance, etc.

Homelessness

This focus area involves helping service or housing organizations assist single persons, families, and active duty military persons, reservists, and veterans and their families who are currently homeless (those who lack a fixed, regular and adequate night-time residence) or potentially homeless (those who live in substandard, unstable, or non-permanent housing).

Examples:

- Provide total case management and other related services that address the systemic causes of homelessness and seek to prevent homelessness and/or its reoccurrence (e.g., mental health counseling, drug and/or alcohol treatment, post-traumatic stress syndrome, domestic violence-related services, employment assistance, etc.). Priority will be given to programs that maintain a direct connection between these services and supporting people to obtain and stay in permanent housing.
- Increase, maintain or expand existing shelters, temporary or permanent affordable housing options in the area for single adults, families, active duty military persons, reservists, and veterans and their families. Highest priority will be given to programs that focus primarily on permanent housing solutions.
- Facilitate the coordination of services among providers to increase the number of individuals served and improve program quality and service delivery
- Increase access to programs that promote self-sufficiency, including life skills training, financial literacy, and job training and placement
- Support individuals experiencing homelessness to navigate the services available in their communities and access those programs that best meet their needs
- Conduct street outreach intended to connect unsheltered people to services



Hunger Relief and Nutrition

Targeting individuals and families who unwillingly go without food for intermittent or extended periods of time and/or who lack access to enough food to fully meet basic food needs (including nutritional needs) at all times. Programs should seek to provide beneficiaries with the food they require, work to ensure they have the access to healthy choices, and/or support them to increase their ability to prepare food for their families that is both appealing and healthy.

Examples:

- Strengthen the capacity of food–distribution organizations to address unmet nutritional needs, especially those that target low–income families, children, active duty military persons, reservists, veterans and their families, and people who are homebound, elderly, living with AIDS, or homeless
- Increase access to and awareness of readily available and existing food–distribution systems and other resources (e.g., programs that raise awareness about program eligibility; information and applications for USDA food and nutrition service programs)
- Provide nutritious foods and/or educational programming that supports people to make healthy food choices (purchasing and preparing) on a budget
- Support beneficiaries to address the various non-food bills that threaten their food security, such as housing costs, energy bills, pet needs, etc.
- Increase the access of low-income and rural consumers to opportunities to buy high-quality, affordable, nutritious food, including produce (e.g., through increasing appropriate retail outlets in their own communities, addressing transportation needs, etc.)
- Increase coordination among providers of hunger relief services, including shared meal preparation facilities, as well as across other services that are important to the same beneficiary population
- Raise community awareness of the problem of hunger and the importance of various hunger relief and nutrition interventions

Note: ACECF does not fund one-time holiday food delivery initiatives and is inclined to decline one-off feeding programs.

Senior Services (including adults with disabilities)

Addresses the growing and varying needs of senior citizens over 65 and/or adults over 18 with physical and learning disabilities*, facilitating full participation in activities of daily living and improving overall quality of life.

Examples:

- Access to day care and residential services, and other programs that offer socialization, health care, hospice care, educational, or nutritional opportunities
- Case management and counseling services that improve the clients' quality of life and ensure access to needed and appropriate services, including special services for elderly veterans. May include initiatives designed to help older adults and their caregivers to navigate and enroll in the array of services that may be available.



- Transportation to and from medical appointments, day care facilities, grocery shopping, and education/socialization opportunities
- Permanent housing solutions, housing repair, and home modifications, as well as efforts to improve the livability of the surrounding community, to allow older adults and adults with physical disabilities to remain in their homes and live independently
- Life skills, financial literacy skills, or job skills training programs, including vocational rehabilitation, which promote self-sufficiency
- Educational programs that support older adults to manage or mitigate common health risks (e.g., chronic disease, falls, inadequate physical activity, behavioral health disorders)
- Education and training for service providers in providing culturally sensitive services to seniors and adults with disabilities from diverse backgrounds, including the specific needs of active duty military persons, reservists or veterans and their families
- Caregiver training and respite services for caregivers

Youth Services (including youth with disabilities)

Targets underserved youth from early childhood through 12th grade, enabling them to make healthy decisions and find paths to successful adulthood and/or youth with physical or learning disabilities, ages 0-18* (child must be in a learning or school setting); offers programs during non-school hours (after school, summer, weekends, holidays, etc.) or during school hours but supplemental and offered by a nonprofit; offers ongoing relationships with adults and/or older youth as leaders, role models, and/or mentors; AND focuses on building our youths' developmental assets, personal strengths and self-confidence.

Examples:

- Seek to build non-cognitive skills, such as executive function, self-control, and grit
- Seek to reduce violence, gang membership, and crime among youth through trauma-informed care, peer outreach and mediation initiatives, parent and family-based strategies, mentoring, conflict resolution, etc.
- Increase the quality and/or accessibility of self-advocacy training, tutoring and other education programs, art and self-expression programs, mentoring, life skills, and entrepreneurial programs that offer youth an opportunity to find their passions and redirect energy away from risky behaviors
- Provide life skills, job or vocational skills training that promote self-sufficiency and/or prepare youth for quality, long-term employment or to further their education
- Target the issue of youth obesity by raising awareness, and offering nutrition programs, health education programs, and structured exercise and recreation programs that include a health education component
- Provide opportunities for youth from immigrant and/or refugee households to improve their ability to assimilate and succeed in our communities, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, culturally sensitive after-school programs, and parent education and involvement efforts



- Provide legal support, counseling, foster care, or other services to youth who are living in unsafe or unstable home environments. This includes (but is not limited to) LGBTQ youth and youth transitioning out of the foster care system.
- Address critical educational issues that could inhibit future educational success, such as STEM readiness and summer learning loss
- Facilitate full participation in daily living and address the specialized needs of youth with physical and/or learning disabilities*, or the unique needs of children of active duty military persons, reservists or veterans.

ACECF will give preference to proposals for programs that serve youth primarily during non-school hours (after school, weekends, and the summer). Programs that are offered in school during school hours must be supplemental to the school curriculum and offered by nonprofit organizations, not the school district or private contractors. All programs must strive for a lasting impact on the youth's life and overall well-being.

** ACECF defines a physical disability as a permanent physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual or that impedes the completion of daily tasks using traditional methods. ACECF defines a learning disability as a neurological condition that either prevents or hinders someone from learning basic skills or processing information at the same rate as most people of the same age. The most common learning disabilities are dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia. Although individuals with ADD/ADHD may struggle with learning, these disorders are not considered learning disabilities according to the National Institute of Mental Health.*

Note: ACECF will review proposals that serve children ages 0-5 with a physical or learning disability and provide services in one or more of the areas described above only if the majority (more than 75%) of the children being served have a physical or learning disability. ACECF will not fund general pre-school or day-care programs.