

Hazel Miller Foundation Grantmaking Categories

These category descriptions are written to reflect the Hazel Miller Foundation's stated focus areas and common patterns in community foundation/private foundation grantmaking.

How to choose a category: Many proposals span multiple areas. Applicants should select the category that best reflects the primary purpose of the request (the main problem being addressed and the primary outcomes). The Foundation may reclassify requests internally to support balanced allocations across focus areas.

1) Education

The Hazel Miller Foundation funds learning opportunities that help children, youth, and adults gain skills, credentials, and confidence to succeed in school, work, and community life. This includes efforts that strengthen academic achievement, expand access to high-quality learning experiences, reduce barriers to participation (cost, transportation, technology, supplies), and increase educational attainment—especially for learners facing economic hardship or systemic barriers.

- **Typical investments include:** classroom enrichment; tutoring and mentoring; literacy and early learning; STEM and hands-on learning; career and technical education; scholarships and student supports; arts-in-education; family engagement; wraparound supports that directly improve educational access and persistence.
- **Strong proposals often demonstrate:** clear learning goals; alignment with evidence-informed practice; partnerships with schools or trusted community organizations; plans to reach underserved learners; and simple, meaningful outcomes (e.g., attendance, course completion, credential attainment, reading/math gains, graduation, post-secondary transitions).
- **Notes:** Education requests may be funded as programs/projects, operating support for education-focused organizations, or targeted supports such as equipment, supplies, transportation, or fees when these directly enable participation.

2) Youth Services

Youth Services grants support the healthy development, safety, and well-being of children and teens outside of the traditional classroom setting. The Foundation prioritizes programs that provide safe places to learn and belong, strengthen protective

factors (trusted adults, stable routines, positive peer connections), and help young people build life skills, leadership, resilience, and pathways to opportunity.

- **Typical investments include:** after-school and summer programming; youth mentoring; recreation and sports access; youth leadership and civic engagement; mental health and prevention supports; violence/abuse prevention and child advocacy; services for youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability; foster youth supports; inclusive programming for youth with disabilities.
- **Strong proposals often demonstrate:** trauma-informed and culturally responsive practice; safety and safeguarding policies; clear referral pathways and partnerships; youth voice and family engagement; and outcomes such as increased attendance/engagement, improved well-being, reduced risk factors, or successful transitions to school/work.
- **Notes:** Youth Services may overlap with Education, Diversity, and Culture & the Arts; applicants should select the primary category that best matches the core purpose of the request.

3) Hunger and Poverty Alleviation

Hunger and Poverty Alleviation grants address urgent basic needs and support stability for individuals and families experiencing financial hardship. The Foundation invests in solutions that help people meet immediate necessities (food, hygiene, shelter, utilities) and strengthen longer-term stability (housing pathways, benefits access, employment supports), with an emphasis on dignified, barrier-reducing service models.

- **Typical investments include:** food banks and food distribution; meal programs; nutrition access initiatives; emergency financial assistance (rent, utilities, transportation, medical co-pays) when tied to clear eligibility and local benefit; hygiene centers and supplies; case management and navigation; housing stability and homelessness response; support for seniors and other vulnerable populations.
- **Strong proposals often demonstrate:** high community need; low-barrier access; coordination to avoid duplication; culturally appropriate service delivery; and outcomes such as households served, reduced time in crisis, successful housing placements, improved food security, or increased benefits enrollment.
- **Notes:** The Foundation may prioritize requests that direct the largest share of funds to direct services and client impact, with clear plans for operational sustainability.

4) Civic and Community Services and Amenities

Civic and Community Services and Amenities grants strengthen the community infrastructure that makes Edmonds and South Snohomish County a healthy, connected, and vibrant place to live. This category includes support for public-serving services, community gathering spaces, and amenities that promote belonging, safety, recreation, and civic pride. Investments may support government entities and nonprofit partners when the primary benefit is clearly public and locally accessible.

- **Typical investments include:** community events and inclusive public programming; neighborhood and community-building initiatives; volunteerism and service programs; public safety and preparedness efforts (non-law-enforcement community safety models, disaster readiness, emergency supplies); parks and recreation access; improvements to community facilities that increase public benefit (e.g., accessibility upgrades, equipment, community room enhancements).
- **Strong proposals often demonstrate:** broad community benefit; free or low-cost public access; thoughtful outreach to diverse residents; partnerships that leverage other funding; and outcomes such as participation levels, increased access for underserved residents, improved accessibility, or measurable improvements to a public resource.
- **Notes:** For capital or facility-related requests, applicants should clearly distinguish between routine maintenance and improvements that create lasting, community-wide benefit.

5) The Environment

Environment grants protect and restore the natural resources that sustain the region's quality of life, with emphasis on locally relevant conservation outcomes such as healthier waterways, shorelines, salmon habitat, forests, and open space. The Foundation supports community-based environmental stewardship that combines direct restoration or protection work with education, volunteer engagement, and practical actions that reduce environmental harm.

- **Typical investments include:** habitat restoration and native planting; salmon recovery and watershed health; beach and park stewardship; environmental education and citizen science; climate resilience and adaptation at the community level; pollution prevention and waste reduction; access to nature for youth and families; equipment and supplies that enable local stewardship work.

- **Strong proposals often demonstrate:** clear, place-based environmental outcomes; collaboration with agencies, tribes, schools, or local coalitions; appropriate permits/landowner permissions when relevant; and outcomes such as acres restored, invasive species removed, volunteers engaged, water quality indicators, or community behaviors changed.
- **Notes:** The Foundation generally prioritizes efforts with visible local impact in the service area and practical stewardship actions over broad awareness-only campaigns.

6) Diversity

Diversity grants advance equitable access to opportunity and community life for people who have been historically underserved, underrepresented, or marginalized. The Foundation supports organizations and initiatives that reduce disparities, remove barriers to participation, foster cross-cultural understanding, and ensure residents can access services and experiences that help them thrive—regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, language, disability, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or income.

- **Typical investments include:** culturally specific services; language access and interpretation; inclusive community programming; disability access and accommodations; leadership development for underrepresented groups; equity-centered youth and family supports; outreach that connects residents to education, health, housing, or legal resources; community dialogues and bridge-building initiatives tied to concrete community outcomes.
- **Strong proposals often demonstrate:** leadership from the communities served; culturally responsive practice; partnerships that increase reach and trust; and outcomes such as increased service access, improved client stability, stronger representation in leadership, or measurable reductions in barriers (cost, transportation, language).
- **Notes:** Diversity is both a stand-alone category and a cross-cutting value; proposals in any category may be stronger when equity and inclusion are clearly embedded in design, delivery, and evaluation.

7) Culture and the Arts

Culture and the Arts grants enrich community life through opportunities to create, experience, and share arts and cultural expression. The Foundation supports organizations that make arts and culture accessible to local residents, strengthen community identity and connection, preserve and celebrate diverse cultural traditions,

and provide pathways for artists and cultural workers to contribute to the region's social and economic vitality.

- **Typical investments include:** community performances and exhibits; arts education and youth arts access; free or low-cost cultural programming; public art and creative placemaking; arts participation for seniors and people with disabilities; culturally specific arts and heritage programs; equipment and production needs that directly expand public access.
- **Strong proposals often demonstrate:** accessible public benefit (affordability, outreach, ADA access); clear artistic or cultural goals; community partnerships; and outcomes such as attendance/participation, increased access for underserved residents, youth skill-building, or documented community engagement and feedback.
- **Notes:** The Foundation values arts and culture both as essential community amenities and as vehicles for education, healing, inclusion, and community connection.