



Southern Pine Electric Cooperative Members Helping Members Community Trust Fund Policy and Guidelines

- I. Purpose:** The Southern Pine Electric Cooperative Members Helping Members Trust Fund will be funded by voluntary contributions from members of the Cooperative. Contributions will be used in the local areas of the service territory which includes Copiah, Covington, Forrest, Jasper, Jefferson Davis, Lawrence, Newton, Rankin, Scott, Simpson, and Smith counties for nonprofit, charitable, safety, and educational purposes.
- II. Major Funding Categories:** Although there are many worthy charitable and educational projects and community needs in our service territory, the limited availability of funds requires us to establish funding priority categories. Funds will be granted to organizations or charities who align with Southern Pine Electric’s mission, culture and values.
- A. Community Service:**
1. Programs, projects and organizations, that are important components of a community’s overall quality of life.
 2. Programs and projects that enhance the cultural environment of communities in our service territory without being controversial in nature.
 3. Up to three annual disbursements for a weather or other catastrophic event within the service territory that will help secure the safety and well-being of members, collectively, in an amount not to exceed Three Thousand and NO/100 Dollars (\$3000) per event. Weather or catastrophic event disbursements may not be paid to any individual but to a church or other charitable organization located directly within the service territory assisting with restoration services to members.
- B. Economic Development:**
1. Programs and projects designed to promote greater economic stability by helping to expand and diversify local economies and promote tourism.
 2. Community leadership programs designed to improve problem solving skills and empower people to become self-reliant in identifying solutions to local economic and social problems.
- C. Education and Youth:**
1. School grants and other programs/projects that benefit students/teachers in Southern Pine Electric’s eleven county service territory.
 2. Programs that are designed to combat critical social problems affecting youth.
 3. Programs and projects that promote the academic achievement and advancement of students.

D. Environment:

1. Programs and projects that promote community recycling, beautification, and natural resource preservation.
2. Community-based environmental quality education programs.

III. Funding Restrictions:

A. Contributions will only be made to support bona fide charitable nonprofit organizations, programs, and activities.

B. Contributions generally will not be made for:

1. Lobbying, or political campaigns
2. Fund-raising dinners, raffles, and other events
3. Individuals
4. Capital fund campaigns
5. National or state fund drives
6. Advertising
7. Internal payroll or administrative expenses of an organization
8. Activities considered to be controversial

IV. Evaluation Factors: The following factors will be considered in the evaluation of all funding requests:

1. Potential benefit to members and the entire community.
2. Level of community support for the program or project or the organization requesting the fund.
3. Fiscal and administrative capability of the organization to deliver a quality service or program.
4. Results that are predictable and can be evaluated.

V. Fund Recipients: It shall be the responsibility of the Southern Pine Advisory Committee and the Pinebelt Foundation to evaluate funding request applications and allocate contributions to accomplish the purposes and intent of these guidelines.

VI. Project Timing: When a grant has been approved, the organization has one year to implement the project. The advisory committee may allocate the funds directly toward a specific portion of an approved project if desired.

VII. Summary:

- A. Based on Trust Fund guidelines, nonprofits, community-based or volunteer organizations, educational and civic organizations that generally qualify as exempt under 501(C)(3) may apply. Funds will be used for the greater good of our communities for organizations or charities who align with Southern Pine Electric's mission, culture and values.
- B. Any 501(C)(3) organization in Southern Pine Electric's eleven county service area – Copiah, Covington, Forrest, Jasper, Jefferson Davis, Lawrence, Newton, Rankin, Scott, Simpson, and Smith may apply for funding.
- C. Grant awards ranging up to Ten Thousand and NO/100 Dollars (\$10,000.00) may be made to an organization per fiscal year (January – December). Grant requests over \$10,000 may be considered at the discretion of the advisory committee on a limited basis.

- D. The foundation selects applications for funding two times per year. For consideration for funding, completed applications must be received during the months of February and August. Incomplete applications will not be considered.