

# **Meeker Cooperative Electric Trust Guidelines**

## **Adopted August 9, 2007**

### **I. Policy and Purpose**

The Meeker Cooperative Electric Trust will be funded by Operation Round Up voluntary contributions from members of Meeker Cooperative and from other sources of funds available to the Trust. The Electric Trust will seek to disperse Operation Round Up contributions to multiple organizations and communities primarily located in the area served by Meeker Cooperative Light and Power Association for charitable and educational purposes, including emergency energy assistance.

### **II. Geographic Focus**

Contributions shall be focused geographically within the area served by the Cooperative and adjacent areas. Organizations that provide programs and benefits to people who live in this geographic area are eligible for funding consideration, even though the organization is located elsewhere.

### **III. Major Funding Categories**

Although there are many worthy charitable and educational projects and community needs in our local area, the limited availability of funds requires us to establish funding priorities. New funding requests will generally be given priority over projects/organizations previously funded. In addition, the Trust has established the following funding priority categories:

#### A. Community Service

1. Programs, projects and organizations that are important components of a community's overall quality of life, with emphasis on public safety, health care, self-sufficiency and basic human needs.
2. Programs and projects that enhance the cultural environment of communities in our local area.

## B. Economic Development

1. Programs and projects designed to promote greater economic stability by helping to expand and diversify local economies, with emphasis on business retention and expansion, new business development and tourism.
2. Programs and projects that encourage cooperation among regional and community economic development organizations.
3. 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 scholarships and other programs and projects with an emphasis on math and science education and Cooperative educational programs.
2. Programs that are designed to combat critical social problems affecting our children and youth, with an emphasis on children and teens at risk.
3. Programs and projects that promote wellness and encourage youth participation in physical fitness activities.

## D. Environment

1. Programs and projects that promote community recycling and natural resource preservation.
2. Community-based environmental quality education programs.
3. Environmentally sensitive agricultural research programs and projects.

## E. Emergency Energy Assistance

1. Community Action Programs, Heatshare and other local and statewide fuel funds established by an energy provider, the State of Minnesota or any other entity that collects and distributes money for low-income emergency energy assistance and meets the minimum criteria, including income eligibility criteria, for receiving money from the Federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program and the Program's Incentive Fund for Leveraging Non-Federal Resources.
2. Funds distributed under this funding category shall comply with Minnesota Statute Section 268.371.

## F. Disaster Relief

Programs and projects that provide disaster relief and food, clothing, shelter, medical care, clean up and repairs and reconstruction in an emergency following an accident, a severe storm or other causes.

## **IV. Funding Restrictions**

- A. Contributions shall generally be made to non-profit organizations that have been granted tax-exempt status under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3).
- B. Contributions will generally only be awarded once during a calendar year to an entity.
- C. Contributions shall generally not be made for:
  - 1. Lobbying or to political organizations.
  - 2. Religious purposes.
  - 3. Veteran, fraternal, and labor organizations.
  - 4. Fundraising dinners, raffles, and other events.
  - 5. Individuals, except educational scholarships, disaster relief (i.e. storm, flood, tornado) and catastrophic injury or illness.
  - 6. Capital fund and/or endowment fund campaigns.
  - 7. National and state organizations or fund drives.
  - 8. Advertising.
  - 9. Feasibility Studies.
  - 10. Ongoing operating expenses.
  - 11. Educational institutions (except scholarships to include such things as alternative schools).

## **V. Evaluation Factors**

- A. The following factors shall be considered in the evaluation of all funding requests:
  - 1. Potential benefit to Co-op members and area residents primarily located in the area served by Meeker Cooperative Light and Power Association.
  - 2. Level of community support for the program or project or the organization requesting the funds.
  - 3. Fiscal and administrative capability of the organization to deliver a quality service or program.
  - 4. Results that are positive and can be evaluated.
  - 5. Projects must be attainable within the projected timeline.

6. Award recipients must file a progress report within 6 months of the receipt of the award dollars. No additional dollars will be granted until the report is on file.
  - B. Disburse funding for projects across multiple organizations and communities in order to benefit a broad segment of the Cooperative community.
  - C. It shall be the responsibility of all trustees to evaluate funding requests and allocate contributions to accomplish the purposes and intent of these guidelines.