**2025 Community Grant Program: Operating Support**

Applicant Guidelines

The Community Grant Program is Greater Worcester Community Foundation’s signature funding opportunity, awarding close to $2 million annually across five strategic focus areas for both discrete project/programming and general operating support.

The following guidelines are for the application for operating support.

**Timeline:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **NEW Applicants** | **RENEWALS** |
| **Information Session** | September 10 at 9:00 a.m. on Zoom | Details emailed on July 7 |
| **Application Opens** | August 11 | July 7 |
| **Application Closes** | October 3 | August 8 |
| **Decisions** | December 6 |
| **Payment** | Late December |
| **Grantee Report** | Group debriefs scheduled at a later date |

**Focus Areas:** We are looking to support organizations who have a mission highly aligned with one of the following areas:

1. **Arts & Creativity**: Building and supporting a diverse and strong arts & culture ecosystem where all belong.
2. **Basic Needs**: Working to ensure all residents of our community have food and shelter.
3. **Economic Opportunity**: Supporting individuals in building skills and creating opportunity for career preparation, advancement and/or wealth building.
4. **Health & Wellbeing**: Strengthening the systems that ensure those from historically excluded populations have equitable access to healthcare.
5. **Youth Development**: Resources/experiences/leadership opportunities for youth that are often hard to access

**Criteria:** We strive to be in partnership with organizations with the following:

* High mission alignment with the strategic focus areas listed above.
* Geographic alignment (based in Worcester County and at least 75% of your total service delivery footprint is within the county).
* Local presence and involvement in pressing local issues (coalitions, networks, etc.)
* Sound organizational practice in the areas of operations, governance, finance and HR.

**Eligibility:**

* Types of Organizations
	+ 501c3 nonprofits, or any entity operating under a fiscal sponsorship of a 501c3.
	+ Collaboratives and coalitions with a fiscal sponsor and identified project lead.
* Geographic Location & Service Area
	+ - Based in Worcester County and exclusively or primarily serving Worcester County residents.
* Ineligible Organizations & Individuals:
	+ Businesses
	+ Government organizations or municipalities
	+ Houses of worship
	+ Individuals (scholarships, tuition, direct aid etc.)
	+ Projects or discrete programming of any nature
	+ Organizations requesting support for capital projects/campaigns

**Requested Amount:**

We seek to make grant investments that are as transformative as possible given our financial resources and the current needs of our local nonprofit sector and community. We are aspirational in our role to correct larger historical philanthropic trends and practices that have created barriers to accessing funding for certain types of organizations.

Please use the following guide when considering your request:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Annual Operating Budget Size** | **Requests Are Eligible Up To** |
| Under $150,000 | 20% of budget |
| 150,001 - $400,000 | 10% of budget |
| $400,0001- 1,000,000 | 5% of budget |
| $1,000,0001- $5,000,000  | $25,000 (max) |
| Over $5,000,000 | Ineligible |

\*We know in some circumstances, an operating grant of more than 20% of your budget could be transformative. If that is the case, there is space in the application for you to share more.

\*\*If you are applying for renewal support and are requesting a change from your previous years grant, please use the narrative space to explain why.

**GWCF Support & Feedback**

* **Before You Submit:** You may reach out to a member of our program team for coaching, conversation and/or an application review.
* **Applications Under Review:** Every application we receive undergoes a fair and thorough review. You will be notified each step of the way regardless of the outcome.
* **Decisions**: Program staff are happy to have follow up conversations. We can share themes and feedback on how your application faired through the process.