

INTRODUCTION

The Women's Fund of Central Ohio is a transformational grantmaker committed to creating social change to advance economic empowerment and leadership opportunities for women and girls. Since our first demonstration grant in 2002, we have invested in equitable solutions that address root cause issues and systemic barriers. Through research and data, The Women's Fund identifies best practices and focuses impact. We have engaged over 1,000 community members as grant readers to inform what the community needs, including backing programs others wouldn't fund. Grant partner programs have sparked social change with a ripple effect impacting tens of thousands of people across central Ohio.

VISION A future where gender equality is the norm in life and work.

MISSION The Women's Fund of Central Ohio is a public foundation whose mission is to transform the lives of women and girls by mobilizing the collective power and passion of all people working together.

ANNUAL GRANTMAKING OVERVIEW

We accept Letters of Intent (LOI) prior to inviting full applications. The LOI is an abbreviated online form where you will describe what you intend to do, how it will be measured, and how much funding you need to do the work. An LOI is required to be considered for a grant.

[Visit our website for specific instructions for submitting an LOI.](#)

As you consider applying for a grant, read through this document in its entirety for detailed information on what types of proposals we will accept. LOI applications will be reviewed by staff to ensure that they meet the minimum funding criteria, which includes alignment to our grantmaking philosophy, theory of change, grantmaking priorities, and eligibility. LOI applications submitted by the deadline that meet the minimum funding criteria will be invited to submit a full application for funding consideration.

The Women's Fund will support new and innovative, as well as established programs. Programs may include single day or multi-day programming, in-person or virtual programming, or initiatives that may not directly serve individuals when focused on outreach or advocacy. We will support operating costs for your program including costs related to child care needs, transportation, or stipends.

Grants will be made in amounts up to \$20,000 for programs that will take place between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021. Funds will be announced in February 2021 and retroactively applicable to January 1, 2021. Funds will be released within thirty days of the award announcement and upon receipt of required signed documents.

The Women's Fund reviews grants through our participatory grant reader process that welcomes a diverse group of community members who are trained to review grant applications according to our selection criteria. Grant readers make valuable suggestions to ensure that The Women's Fund's work in the community will be impactful.

Grant reader recommendations are then sent to The Women’s Fund Grants Committee that is comprised of board members and veteran grant readers who review the recommendations and create a recommended funding slate within the available budget dollars. The Grants Committee, prior to a decision on the grant, may request additional information about the grant proposal. The Women’s Fund Board of Directors makes the final funding decision.

All applicants will receive email confirmation of their grant submission. Additionally, all applicants who submit a full application will be provided written feedback from the grant readers about their application.

GRANTMAKING PHILOSOPHY

Our grantmaking philosophy is to create social change.

We seek to fund efforts that address the root cause of a social problem or explore new approaches to solving an issue. We are interested in funding efforts that go beyond providing direct service and that create change in the larger system of how we live, work, and learn. Social change programs create a ripple effect to the larger community, meaning that the outcomes of the program go beyond those directly served and create an additional layer of those who are indirectly impacted by the program.

The Women’s Fund also supports organizations conducting social change advocacy efforts within our priority areas. Advocacy is defined as working to affect the actions of community systems, any level of government administrative practices, regulations, executive actions, or judicial actions. Advocacy activities may include but are not limited to public education, policy development, community organizing, research, and leadership development of women and girls.

Our grantmaking theory of change is that gender inequities are driven by rigid gender norms that intersect with other biases related to race, age, and class, among others.

Gender norms are the implicit or explicit rules, expectations, and standards placed on both sexes regarding how they should behave and be treated by society. Gender norms often intersect with implicit bias to create gender bias.

Implicit biases are the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and often without awareness based on any number of identities we perceive in others such as gender, age, or race.

Our grantmaking priorities are based on the strategic priorities of The Women’s Fund.

The strategic priorities are focused on creating economic empowerment and leadership for women and girls. Programs must align with one or more of the focus areas outlined below. We recognize that there may be challenges for organizations working on these priorities due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For programs that meet the eligibility criteria and align with our strategic priorities, we will consider funding costs related to COVID-19 including operating costs, program adaptation, and COVID-19 relief and support efforts. This may include, but is not limited to: technology, internet, or phone costs for staff or program participants; software or other expenses to transition in-person programming to virtual; additional print, transportation, or childcare costs; or other needs identified by the women or girls you intend to serve.

Economic Empowerment:

- **Child care and the benefits cliff:** We will address both the benefits cliff and the benefits gap for child care to address living wage for women and families. Research shows that child care costs are the single largest expense for women and families in central Ohio. Accessibility and affordability of child care is the best opportunity to influence the cliff effect – when a minimal increase in hourly wages results in the complete termination of a benefit and a dramatic net loss of resources.
- **Access to contraception:** We are committed to addressing women’s healthcare. Enabling women to control when to have children allows them to shape their financial, educational, and professional futures. Additionally, research shows that access to contraception has played a significant factor for the reduction in teen pregnancy over the last decade. In order to continue the progress we have made in the reduction in teen pregnancy rates and decreased unplanned pregnancies and infant mortality, it is critical to remove barriers to access to all contraceptive methods.
- **Reduction of teen pregnancy via comprehensive, medically accurate sex education:** We know that exposure to a comprehensive, medically accurate sex education curriculum that includes all methods of birth control reduces unintended pregnancies. Access to contraception and comprehensive, medically accurate sex education have been significant factors in the reduction in teen pregnancy and unintended pregnancies over the last decade.
- **Paid leave:** We are committed to addressing workplace policies to encourage a gender equitable work environment. Current policies do not adequately support women striving to meet the obligations of work and family. Extending access to paid family leave strengthens women and families, reduces gender and economic disparities, and has a positive impact on local economies.
- **Pay Equity:** We have increased community awareness around the wage gap and are committed to continue the conversation with a focus on pay equity or comparing work of equal value and looking at the impact of gender norms, as well as race. Closing the wage gap between women and men and establishing pay equity is critical to ensuring women maximize their economic potential.

Leadership for Women and Girls:

- **Women running for elected office:** Women in elected office leads to an advancement in gender equality. Women are more likely to work across party lines, are more responsive to constituent concerns and prioritize issues that influence families and minorities—education, health, etc. The positive impacts of women in office are abundant and widespread, promoting more women to run for public office will maximize the policies that positively impact women and families.

- **Advocacy training on voting rights and informed voting:** All voices have the power to create change, and one of the most powerful ways to do so is through civic engagement. Women fought hard to win the right to vote – the ballot box is the one place where women's voices are equal. Voting is still one of the best ways for women to ensure that our elected leaders support policies that will expand opportunity and empower women.
- **Women's leadership and influence on policy:** When women are in leadership positions they will tend to introduce or create policies that are family-friendly, more equitable for women. We are committed to supporting programs that will develop women's leadership to increase the number of women in decision making positions.
- **Girls' leadership:** Building girls' leadership is a fundamental element to them becoming economically empowered and leaders as women. Addressing girls' confidence is important to build the pipeline for women leaders.
- **Women's philanthropy:** Growing the number of women who are bold in their philanthropy will not only grow the funding stream to accomplish the work, but to also create a generative and growing community of women leaders.

ELIGIBILITY

- All funds must be distributed through nonprofit organizations federally determined as 501(c)(3) entities. Applicants without 501(c)(3) status must engage a fiscal agent to administer their grant funds.
- All programs must serve women and girls in one or more of the central Ohio counties of Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, or Union.
- All programs must align with at least one and no more than three of our strategic priorities.
- All programs must clearly articulate and address one or two of the five shifts of social change.
- All programs must have a gender lens and address gender norms.
- Funds may not be used for:
 - Organizations that do not provide a respectful atmosphere for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning, transgender, intersex, or asexual.
 - Organizations that seek to restrict reproductive rights.
 - Programs that promote religious activities and/or beliefs.
 - Political campaigns or promotion of candidates for public office.
 - Advancement of capital or endowment campaigns.
 - Event sponsorship.
 - Scholarships that fund individual students.
 - Co-educational programs that do not clearly communicate a specific and unique focus on women and girls.

YOUR COMMITMENT

The Women’s Fund of Central Ohio works in partnership with its grantees to promote the success of women and girls across central Ohio. We expect that the investment of our grant funds will be matched by the recipients’ investment of time, wisdom, and other resources. We expect that grant partners will:

- Participate in our evaluation program, including Making the Case (online evaluation tool).
- Participate in our learning community.
- Provide feedback and ideas for women and girls in central Ohio.
- Provide inspiring stories and pictures of the program for Women’s Fund materials and marketing.
- Participate in annual Grant Partner Training Day.

Each grant partner will be required to participate in our evaluation program which includes implementing Making the Case. Training will be provided by The Women’s Fund.

The evaluation will follow this schedule:

3 months	Appreciative inquiry evaluation questions (new partners)
6 months	Update program evaluation worksheet, narrative questions, budget update
10 months	May ask grant partners for additional evaluation measures
12 months	Final evaluation, program evaluation worksheet, final budget

DATES AND DEADLINES

Letter of Intent Released	Wednesday, September 2, 2020
Grant Workshops	Wednesday, September 9, 2020 from 12:00 - 1:30 PM. Register here. Tuesday, September 22, 2020 from 9:30 - 11:00 AM. Register here.
Letter of Intent Deadline	Monday, September 28, 2020 at 5 PM
Full Grant Application Invitation	Monday, October 12, 2020
Technical Assistance	October 16 through November 13, 2020
Grant Application Due	Friday, November 13, 2020 at 5 PM
Grants Announced	February 2021
Funds Released	Within 30 days of funding announcement and upon receipt of required signed documents

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

To aid in the Letter of Intent and grant writing process, The Women's Fund will hold grant workshops. These workshops are not mandatory but are recommended and will help to understand The Women's Fund's grantmaking goals, objectives, and process. Workshops will be held the following dates:

- Wednesday, September 9, 2020 from 12:00 - 1:30 PM. [Click here to register.](#)
- Tuesday, September 22, 2020 from 9:30 - 11:00 AM. [Click here to register.](#)

If invited to submit a full application, The Women's Fund team will also provide technical assistance to grant applicants. This is intended to support you in writing a compelling application for grant readers with a strong social change component, disrupting gender norms, and includes answering any questions that applicants may have about the process.

Please direct any additional questions to Sarah Pariser, Director of Grants and Programs, at spariser@womensfundcentralohio.org.