



GRANT GUIDELINES 2011

What is the Women's Leadership Fund?

The Women's Leadership Fund (WLF) supports projects that promote women's financial stability, independence as well as opportunities for girls. The women's fund promotes the independence, growth, and self-determination of women and girls by supporting projects that create systemic change and move women and girls toward financial stability and independence.

Our Mission

To create lasting change that moves women and girls toward financial independence.

What challenges do women face as they work toward financial stability and independence?

- Gender discrimination
- Barriers to securing high paying jobs
- Difficulty finding affordable, reliable transportation
- Limited access to affordable, high-quality child care
- Domestic violence
- Scattered and fragmented support services

What supports do girls need as they strive to become self-sufficient women?

- Opportunities to develop new skills and competencies
- Encouragement to explore career opportunities and problem-solve
- Exposure to non-traditional education and career options
- Opportunities to see and learn from women in leadership positions

Why is financial stability and independence so important for women?

Families and communities are stronger when women are financially stable and independent by allowing them to make positive and informed decisions about their families and their futures. Women who are financially stable and independent are significantly more likely:

- To be in safe, healthy relationships
- To provide quality care for their families
- To participate to the fullest ability in the workforce, and
- To contribute their time, talent, and resources to their communities

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Programs may include but are not limited to: improving financial literacy, navigating governmental assistance, enhancing educational/vocation/technical skills, safety, health, mentoring. Special consideration is given to collaborations and unique strategies.

We encourage organizations to work collaboratively to overcome these challenges. Through effective collaboration, organizations can develop cohesive and comprehensive responses to one of the fund's two priorities:

Women often simultaneously face multiple barriers to financial stability and independence. To successfully navigate through these barriers, women need *multifaceted* guidance and support. Consequently, the fund encourages grant requests from organizations willing to work collaboratively with other partners to overcome these multiple challenges. Specifically, the WLF is most interested in funding initiatives that:

- Promote sustained financial stability and independence for women.
- Provide multi-faceted guidance and support to women working toward the goal of financial stability and independence.

Girls receive many messages early in their lives that make it more difficult for them to achieve financial stability and independence as women. The WLF seeks to help at-risk girls and puts priority on long-term projects or those that include long-term follow-up and seeks to fund projects that:

- Help girls have a positive sense of self. Help girls develop and use valuable new skills and competencies.
- Provide opportunities for girls to experience and understand the full range of opportunities available to them.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What programs are eligible for funding?

Programs must have a focus on providing opportunities for women and/or girls in Orange County to obtain self-reliance.

- Administrative or programmatic capacity building
- Strategic partnerships
- Client development
- Other activities which increase participation in Orange County

What are WLF's evaluation criteria?

The WLF Allocation Committee reviews each application and scores the proposed project on the following factors:

1. Does the project meet the WLF Mission?
 - Does the project create a lasting change that moves women and girls toward financial independence?
2. Effectiveness
 - Does the project make sense?
 - Does this project seem to have a high likelihood of achieving its stated goals?
3. Collaboration
 - Does this project include collaborative partners?

4. Applicant
 - Does the applicant have a reputation for the implementing quality programs?
 - Does the applicant have the resources to execute the project?
5. Fiscal Solvency
 - Do the financial statements indicate that the organization/its partners is/are fiscally solvent?
6. Number of People Served?
 - How many women and/or girls will be served by this project?
 - What are the costs per individual served?
7. Measurable Outcomes
 - How will the outcomes be measured?
8. Budget
 - Are the expenses reasonable and necessary?
9. Sustainability
 - Is the project sustainable?
 - Does the project have the resources necessary to sustain this effort over time?

How are grants determined?

Each application is reviewed by the WLF Allocation Committee. Funding recommendations will be reviewed by the WLF Executive Committee, and then presented to the United Way Board of Directors.

Where can we get an application?

Applications are available online at www.womensleadershipocny.org.

What is the range of awards?

WLF will make awards ranging from \$ 3,000 to \$ 10,000 in the 2011/12 funding cycle.

Do you grant money to individuals?

No, we do not grant money to individuals for any purpose.

Do you fund for-profit efforts?

No. We award funds to 501(c) (3) organizations only. However, the Women's Leadership Fund encourages grant applicants to work collaboratively with partners from all community sectors, including business, educational institutions, faith, community, and governmental agencies.

Who can apply?

- Any nonprofit facility, organization, or established program which identifies women and/or girls as primary to their mission or as the focus of a specific project related to their mission.
- Nonprofit organizations which have a minimum of three (3) years of programming history.
- Nonprofits organizations with no outstanding grant reports due to the United Way or the WLF.
- Nonprofit organizations that have not defaulted on previous United Way or WLF funding.

When must the project take place?

Projects must take place between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012.

What is the average number of applicants per year?

The number of applications is increasing every funding cycle. The requests for funding are much greater than what is available for disbursement, making the process highly competitive.

What is the application deadline?

Applications are due Monday, May 2, 2011 by 12 noon. Applications and all required supplemental materials will be accepted ONLY as a single pdf submitted electronically to womensleadershipfund@uwoc.org.

Can applications be submitted by fax?

No application will be accepted by fax. Applications and their supplemental materials will only be accepted as a single pdf sent via email.

What if our proposal reaches your office after the deadline?

Proposals must be received electronically no later than Monday, May 2, 2011 by 12 noon. Late arrivals will not be considered. We strongly recommend that you submit in advance of the deadline to give yourself ample time to resolve any problems you might encounter.

What is the application review process?

Proposals are reviewed by the Allocation Committee and may be followed by an interview, site visit, or request for additional information. Not all applicants will receive a site visit and this does not indicate whether an applicant will be successful. The Committee is composed of a diverse group of individuals with leadership experience in the nonprofit, education, and business communities. The Committee's role is to review and evaluate proposals in the context of the funding priorities and to make funding recommendations to the Women's Leadership Fund Executive Committee. All decisions made by the Executive Committee are final.

Can our organization apply for multiple years of funding?

Only one funding request per agency per calendar year will be considered, although applicants may re-apply to the WLF in the future.

When will we be notified of funding?

All applicants, whether funded or declined, will be notified on or before June 30, 2011.

Will a mid-year and/or final report be required if an award is made?

Yes. A mid-year report will be due January 31, 2012. A final report will be due July 31, 2012. Specific reporting requirements will be included in the grant notification letter.

How will the grant monies be disbursed?

Upon receipt of a fully executed grants contract, grantee will receive 50% of the total grant; upon WLF acceptance of the mid-year report, grantee will receive 25%; upon WLF acceptance of the final report, grantee will receive remaining balance.

If we have questions, who should we contact?

Grant applicants are encouraged to email questions about their proposals to the WLF at womensleadershipfund@uwoc.org. Please allow 2-3 days for a response to questions.