

2026 GRANTS PROGRAM
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)



BACKGROUND

Women's Fund of Greater La Crosse (WFGL) enriches the lives of women and girls so they can do the same for others. We do this by making grants each year to support local nonprofit programs that elevate women and girls in our community. Our grant program is funded by our two endowments and annual donors.

Despite the dramatic advancement of women in recent decades, women are still far more likely than men to be homeless, live in poverty, be unemployed or under-employed, face violence, and have substandard housing and inadequate healthcare. Through our grant program, we aim to support local programs that are working to increase literacy, prevent violence, promote social, educational, physical and emotional health and well-being, and encourage artistic and personal growth and economic self-sufficiency for women of all ages.

Since our founding in 1998, we have granted over \$1,000,000 to local organizations that:

- Foster an impact on attitudes and actions that benefit women and girls
- Promote opportunity for health and self-sufficiency for women
- Encourage women and girls to develop as philanthropists

You can review a list of previous grantees on our [website](#).

2026 GRANT AWARD AVAILABILITY

The Women's Fund Board of Directors has made \$94,200 available for **new** grant awards in 2026. Grant awards typically range between \$2,000 and \$15,000. Organizations seeking funding less than \$2,000 will have the opportunity to apply for a mini-grant later this year through a simplified process.

This RFP includes the opportunity to apply for one of two types of grants: **standard** or **signature**. Specific limitations apply to each grant type.

- **Standard grants** award one-year of funding. Organizations may request support for the same program for up to three years. WFGL will fund the first year at 100%, the second at no more than 75%, and the third at no more than 50% of first-year funding. You must apply each year for funding. Funding in years two and three is not guaranteed.
- **Signature grants** award multi-year funding. Funds for multi-year awards are limited, and not all programs that apply for multi-year funding will be awarded multiple years. Programs that apply for multi-year funding may be declined for a multi-year award but still approved for a standard one-year award. *Signature grant awards are only available to programs that exclusively serve women and girls.*

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Organizations that meet the criteria below are eligible to apply:

- Public charity, exempt from federal income taxes under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or governmental bodies, including schools and municipalities, if the project is above and beyond regular budgeted items and does not fill budget gaps OR;
- Must have a formal fiscal sponsor relationship with an IRS verified 501(c)3 nonprofit.
- Must be located in and primarily serve women and girls in La Crosse, Monroe, or Trempealeau Counties in Wisconsin and Houston County in Minnesota
- Agree to meet all Grant Awardee Requirements & Expectations listed below

2026 FUNDING PRIORITIES

We are committed to helping make the greater La Crosse area a more inclusive and equitable place for all women and girls. In general, we fund programs that:

- Serve mostly or all women and girls
- Address women's and girls' current and critical needs
- Are inclusive of all identities of women and girls
- Promote the inclusion of women and girls in all of society, including giving back to the community

We know that real, long-lasting change happens when there is a focus on removing existing barriers to self-sufficiency. **In 2026 we will continue our commitment to prioritizing awards for programs that are working to remove barriers to transportation, education, or housing for women and girls.** Safe, affordable, and uncomplicated access to transportation, education, and housing can create pathways to economic independence and self-sufficiency.

Preference is also given to requests that:

- Promote and operate in alignment with diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices
- Aim to fund programs, not singular events (event support is better aligned with mini-grant program)
- Do not have access to many funding sources outside of Women's Fund of Greater La Crosse
- Have a strong plan for measuring program success/impact

RESTRICTIONS

Priority is given to programs that directly impact or serve mostly women and girls. Applicants cannot be seeking funding for programs designed for both boys and girls or men and women (i.e. playground equipment at a school that serves both boys and girls). Requests for programs for boys and men that relate to healthy relationships and support women and girls may be considered.

We will not provide funding to:

- Individuals
- For-profit businesses
- Lobbying efforts
- Political campaigns

- Annual campaigns
- Debt retirement
- Building or capital improvements, unless needed to address an imminent safety need for women and girls
- Projects or programs that require specific religious participation or affiliation

APPLICATION TIMELINE

RFP announced:	March 5, 2026
Application opens:	March 5, 2026
Technical Assistance:	On-going, contact executive_director@womensfundlacrosse.org
Optional Applicant Webinar*:	Option 1: March 20, 2026 @ 12 p.m. Option 2: April 24, 2026 @ 12 p.m.
Application closes:	May 5, 2026 at 4 p.m.
Awards announced:	No later than July 25, 2026
Grant period begins:	Upon receipt of grant award payment in August 2026

**sign-up to receive the virtual meeting link by emailing executive_director@womensfundlacrosse.org*

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All grant applications must be submitted through [La Crosse Area Community Foundation's online grant portal](#). We are grateful for our partnership with LACF to offer a simple, streamlined online application process for both applicants and our volunteer evaluators.

[CLICK HERE TO PREVIEW THE APPLICATION](#) (PDF viewing only)

[CLICK HERE TO APPLY](#) or visit <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=laxcommfoundation>

Please follow the instructions on the login page if you are a new user or need to update your organization's profile information. Applications do not need to be completed in one sitting; the online platform will save your process AS LONG AS YOU HIT 'SAVE' before logging out or closing the program.

Technical Assistance Contact:

Jamie Schloegel, Executive Director
executive_director@womensfundlacrosse.org
 608.780.5710

APPLICATION EVALUATION

The WFGL Impact Committee will score applications and send recommendations to the full Board of Directors for ultimate approval. No paid staff participate in the formal scoring and voting process. The Executive Director is called upon to provide additional information or background if needed. For this reason, we highly encourage applicants to seek technical assistance from the Executive Director to help ensure you submit your most

competitive application. The Executive Director's role in the evaluation process is to ensure the most equitable application and evaluation process possible.

GRANT AWARDEE REQUIREMENTS & EXPECTATIONS

Grant awardees must commit to the following post-award requirements. The act of accepting and cashing the grant award check confirms your agreement to these requirements:

- Completion of a brief written follow-up report to share your impact and verify eligible spending. This report is submitted through the online grant portal and will be due in August 2027 for 2026 grantees.
- Participation in a mid-cycle site visit with a WFGL Impact Committee member. This visit will be scheduled late 2026/early 2027.
- Grant awardees will also be offered the opportunity to attend and/or host a booth at the WFGL Spring Fling and/or Fall Luncheon events. This option is voluntary. Participation in no way impacts award decisions.