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BWGC Receives Record 181 Grant Applications

The Baltimore Women’s Giving Circle 2025 grant cycle is under way, with 18 teams of readers evaluating a record 181 applications. Over the previous 10 years, the average number of applications received was 107. The previous record was 122 applications in 2019. That’s quite an increase! The fewest applications received during that 10-year period was 83 in 2018.

2025: 181 Applications	PREVIOUS RECORD: 122 Applications in 2019	PRIOR 10 YEAR AVERAGE: 107 Applications
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Of note, 47% of the applications came from organizations that had never applied to the BWGC before. Combined with organizations which had applied before but were not funded, 75% of this year’s applicants have no funding history with the Circle. Forty-five previously funded organizations have applied, the highest number ever.

Nearly 50% of the applications came from organizations with budgets less than \$500,000, and almost 25% have been in operation for fewer than five years. Although the Circle encourages smaller organizations to apply for unrestricted operating funds because they give grant recipients the greatest flexibility, 58% applied for new or continuing project funding.

The chart below shows the top four categories by dollars funded over the past five years. Organizations that provide workforce development have received the most funds, followed by education, housing, and health services. Those four categories also received the highest number of applications this year (second chart), although in a different order. Funds for education top the list, with 36 applications--more than double the number of education applications received last year.

Grant awards will be announced at the Full Circle Annual Meeting on May 21.

OUR LEADERSHIP
PILLARS/PRIORITY
FOCUS AREAS:



Building
Membership



Strategic
Planning

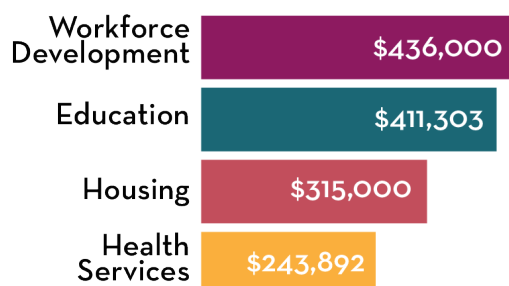


Circle Visibility/
Public Relations

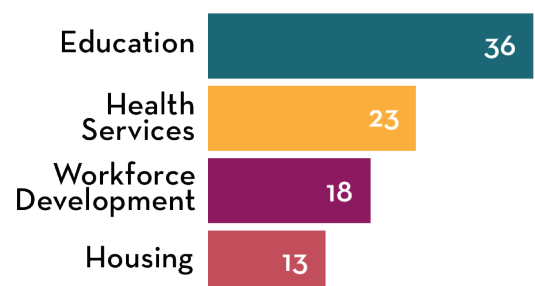


Leadership
Development

Top Four Categories Funded Over the Past Five Years (In Dollars)



Top Four Categories of 2025 Grantee Applications





Co-Chairs Message

There are so many changes, both proposed and final, potentially affecting the Baltimore nonprofit environment and our current and FY 2025-26 grantees that we can safely say that we plan to stay the course, abide by our mission, and keep Circle members informed. We are regularly conferring with local information sources, such as the Baltimore Community Foundation and the Maryland Philanthropic Network, as well as our national sources.

The concept of this year's Steering Committee goals as "Pillars" focuses our progress as we report events associated with Membership growth and stability, Strategic Planning, Leadership development, and Visibility/PR. We chose the Pillars as a result of our 2023 and 2024 Circle membership surveys, as well as from our Steering Committee orientation last summer.

We are excited that Communications is launching a monthly news sheet to remind members of key events for that month, plus brief updates relating to the Pillars on a need-to-know basis. Our more-detailed, periodic newsletter will continue to be distributed to members and friends of the Circle.

Leadership will be announcing the launch of our Strategic Plan initiative. We will be working with an outside consultant to guide us and will keep you informed of our progress.

We were guests of Shanaysha Sauls, CEO of Baltimore Community Foundation (BCF), on February 19 at Women Who Move Maryland, a networking event. Many of the attendees are business owners or leaders in community-centered organizations. This was an opportunity for us to personally invite a number of interested women to join BWGC—and Sauls recognized the Circle in her presentation.

Barbara attended the January 17 strategic planning meeting of the United Way of Central Maryland, which will allow us to report on trends we see in our grantees as well as to hear about the community focus of UWCM.

Attendance has been great at our Full Circle events this year. Shanaysha Sauls spoke to the membership in December about BCF's work with the Circle and over 900 other funders in Baltimore. We hope you will plan to join us on March 26, when the presentation will be on a pilot program focusing on a creative model for health care access involving four local schools of nursing.

Renee Gordon and Barbara Epke

Renee & Barbara

GRANTEE PROFILE

ShareBaby

ShareBaby (sharebaby.org) began in 2014 when three mothers who had baby supplies to spare wanted to share them with neighbors in need. Ten years later, ShareBaby became a first-time Circle grantee. (ShareBaby's community resources coordinator, Keisha Walker, is a Circle member.)

The mission: addressing the unmet basic needs of Baltimore babies and young children through the distribution of diapers and other essential items.

The BWGC grant's impact: According to ShareBaby Executive Director Nadya Dutchin, the \$25,000 grant paid for one full month of diapers for all of the children served in that month (an average of 5,200). Because of increased demand for diapers ShareBaby had placed one more order than in the previous year. The BWGC grant "enabled us to easily meet the increased demand without having to cut back on operating expenses," said Dutchin.

Dutchin related a ShareBaby success story from the past year:

Taking care of five boys, ranging in age from 1- to 11 years old is no small feat. For Rona Perry, each day is a whirlwind of different needs, as each of her five nephews needs something different—sometimes at the same time. Some days it can feel chaotic and overwhelming, but she takes it all in stride and says with a laugh, "Everybody's pulling you in all different directions, and you're just like, 'Oh, Lord have mercy!'"

But amid the challenges, there is some relief: the support she has received from the Judy Center at Abbottston Elementary, one of ShareBaby's 70+ community distribution partners. "They have been a godsend. The diapers, wipes, and even a [double] stroller have been lifesavers. I don't have to worry about, 'Oh, where am I going to get money for diapers?'" The double stroller also has improved her mobility because she can put the two youngest boys (1- and 3 years old) in the stroller and "just keep going!"

Meeting families' basic needs reduces stress and allows them to focus on higher priorities. Ms. Rona expressed her appreciation: "The Judy Center and ShareBaby are a part of my village. They really do help me out a lot," she says.





December Full Circle

On December 11, 90 women came (and 40 tuned in via Zoom) to hear Shanaysha Sauls, president and CEO of the Baltimore Community Foundation (BCF), speak at the Full Circle meeting at Beth El Synagogue. The BCF hosts over 900 charitable funds, including BWGC, and has assets of over \$300 million. Sauls spoke about the BCF, what it is doing, and the philanthropy trends it is seeing in Baltimore City and County. She spoke about BCF's role in strategic investing by supporting youth and adult mental health, education, neighborhoods, and individuals. One initiative she cited was funding micro-loans to new citizens and helping them learn how to establish a credit record. She also talked about the overall importance of advocacy and community building. For more information on BCF, go to www.bcf.org. Before the meeting, Circle members donated pantry supplies for the holiday season to be sent to 2024 grantee GEDCO's clients.

Welcome New Members

Yayoi Anderson

Dorothy Gold

Susan Racanelli

Jennifer Schwartz

Margot Wolman

SAVE THE DATE

March 26 Full Circle

11:30 AM-1 PM

Beth El Synagogue, 8101 Park Heights Ave., Pikesville

Dr. Sarah Szanton, dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing and Patricia M. Davidson Professor of Health Equity and Social Justice, will be joined by community health workers and a nurse practitioner to speak about the "Neighborhood Nursing Model," a program that brings healthcare to people's doorsteps.

COMING SOON

Monthly Member Events Email

The Circle has heard you and is excited to announce that it is starting a monthly one-page email distribution to inform members of BWGC events.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Communications

- Communications is developing a news email to inform BWGC members on Circle activities for the upcoming month.
- The group continues to post on social media and work on quarterly newsletters.

Education

- On January 21, more than 44 Circle members attended Circle Reads (via Zoom) with Chris Wilson, author of the book *The Master Plan: My Journey from Life in Prison to a Life of Purpose*.
- Circle Forum: April 4, 2025, at 10 am on the Johns Hopkins Homewood Campus. Circle members will have an opportunity to visit current grantee Violet Project, a program that provides access to comprehensive reproductive and sexual healthcare to teens and young women.

Grantee Connect

- The Spring Grantee Forum, one of two yearly learning and networking events for all grantees, will be May 6 at Baltimore Hebrew Congregation.
- The topic will address engaging young and female donors.
- The speaker will be from the Howard County Women's Giving Circle.

Membership

- At the March 26 Full Circle Meeting, committee members will work as greeters, assist with check in and the food line, direct new members to their table, and manage the donations table.
- Pat Jones from Immigration Outreach Service Center will speak at the April 30 prospective member event. The organization is a 2024 Circle grantee.

Post Grants

- The Committee's 20 grantee liaison teams wrapped up their mid-year reviews with interaction and site visits between October and December, and presented the findings from their midyear reports at the January committee meeting.
- By and large, they reported that the grantees are doing a great job.
- In December, the Circle Works subcommittee brought about 350 pairs of socks, 200 pairs of gloves, five hats, and 30 gently used coats to Manna House; 31 Circle members heard from Manna House staff and board members about their program and use of Circle funding.



Circle Works subcommittee volunteering at Manna House

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Racial Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (REDI)

- REDI is working with Education to plan a conversation for all members about the film *Right to Read*.
- The Steering Committee has asked REDI to explore approaches to advocacy. By studying how other circles conduct advocacy, REDI hopes to identify possible paths for the BWGC.
- REDI is researching ways to support the Circle's four pillars: Building Membership, Leadership Enhancement, Public Relations, and Strategic Planning.

Calendar of Events

03/26	Full Circle, 11:30-1, Beth El Congregation & Zoom
04/04	Circle Forum, Johns Hopkins Homewood Campus Circle members will have an opportunity to visit current grantee Violet Project, a program that provides access to comprehensive reproductive and sexual healthcare to teens and young women.
05/06	Grantee Connect Forum, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation Topic: Engaging young and female donors.
05/21	Full Circle Annual Meeting, 5-6:30, Chizuk Amuno Congregation