

**The Baltimore Women’s Giving Circle
Guide to the BWGC 2022-2023 Grant Program**

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Introduction to the BWGC Grant Program	2
Grants Criteria	2
Grant Process and Schedule	4
Grant Application - Cover Sheet	5
Grant Application – Mission and History	6
Narrative for Applicants Requesting General Operating Funds	7
Narrative for Applicants Requesting Project Funds	9
Required Attachments: Financial Documents, etc.	12
BWGC Post-Grant Activity	14
FAQs for Grant Applicants	15

Thank you for your interest in our Grant Program. We hope this Guide provides the information you need to complete your application. If you have additional questions, please contact us at grants@thebwgc.org.

Introduction to the Baltimore Women’s Giving Circle Grant Program

Our Mission: “Through collective giving and collaboration, The Baltimore Women's Giving Circle seeks to empower women and their families in the greater Baltimore area to achieve self-sufficiency.”

Our Target Population: Grants are awarded to nonprofit organizations whose services and projects promote self-sufficiency for women and their families. We support women of all ages and their families, helping them to live safe, healthy, and productive lives. Our grants focus on assisting those who are economically challenged in Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

In the past, we have funded non-profits addressing housing, addiction, financial literacy, education, health services, parenting, life skills, mentoring, workforce development, legal services, and violence prevention, among many other program or project services that align with our mission.

Baltimore Women’s Giving Circle Grants Criteria

Geographic Focus:

We support organizations working in Baltimore City or Baltimore County.

Organizations Eligible for Funding:

Organizations must qualify as a nonprofit organization, or have a fiscal agent that qualifies as a nonprofit organization, under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

What is not eligible for funding:

- Capital improvements, fixtures, furniture and equipment, *except for items that directly benefit project participants*
- Purchase of event tickets or event sponsorships
- Deficit reduction
- Annual drives or annual giving campaigns
- Political activities or political action committees
- Projects requiring adherence to or acceptance of a particular religious belief, or projects requiring participation in a religious service or activity
- Organizational endowments

Grant Awards:

Grants are awarded in amounts of \$25,000 or less. Awards are made for a one-year grant beginning on July 1 of the award year and ending on June 30 of the following year. All grant funds must be expended during this time period. Grant monies may be used only for the purpose stated in the grant application. If a funded project needs to be revised, for example, many organizations needed to adapt during the COVID pandemic, the grantee organizations should reach out to the BWGC and request approval of the changes. If grant funds are not spent by the end of the one-year grant period, the remaining balance must be returned to the BWGC, unless an extension has been requested and approved by the BWGC. If a project is discontinued during the grant period, unexpended funds must be returned to the BWGC.

Choosing to Apply for Project of Operational Funding Application

In 2021 we revised our applications. We now ask applicants to select whether they want to apply for General Operating Funds OR Project Funds. **Each organization can submit only one request.** The Circle does not favor one type of application over the other. Rather, grants are awarded for operating funds or projects that best embody the Circle mission and community needs. Organizations should assess which form of support best advances their mission.

Here is some guidance to help you decide which application to use. Again, it bears repeating here. The Circle does not favor one type of application over the other. You should assess which form of support best advances your mission.

You may select Operational Funding if you are seeking funds to:

- Sustain/maintain or even expand your current basic program service offerings. This grant money could pay for your staff salaries, utilities, rent or mortgage payments and program supplies, etc.
- Expand your basic services to a different age group of women or women from a different community, such as the immigrant community. For example, you are planning to offer the same services in another location or to a younger or older cohort of participants.

Note: Operational funding provides more flexibility to support your current or expanded program services.

You may select Project Funding if you are seeking funds to:

- Launch a new service or program activities you have never offered before. This money could be used for hiring new staff, purchasing new program delivery supplies, outreach efforts, etc.
- Launch or sustain a program aimed to specifically support women when your organization's mission provides services to the community at-large. For example, you are offering a workforce training program for women when your organization generally provides food support to the community at-large

- Experiment with an innovative program delivery approach or a new initiative that may require different types of staff than you currently have or additional space, equipment or software, for example.

Note: a project typically has a separate budget from your operations expenses that shows the discrete costs to implement the project.

Applying for Grant Awards:

An organization may submit ONLY one grant proposal, requesting funds for either general operating funds or project funds, per grant cycle.

There are two exceptions to this policy:

1. Large “umbrella” organizations, such as universities that have multiple independent, discrete entities, each of which is under separate executive leadership (such as a school or agency). Any of these independent, discrete entities within the “umbrella” organization may submit grant proposals in the same year.
2. Independent, discrete entities that have separate executive leadership and are linked only by sharing the same fiscal agent. Any such entity may submit a grant proposal in the same year.

Reapplying for Grant Awards:

An organization that receives a grant cannot be funded two years in a row.

Organizations that receive funding may reapply after the following conditions have been met:

- (1) the funds granted have been spent as specified in the grant application; and
- (2) the organization has complied with all other conditions of the grant, including participating in site visits and/or interviews and submitting the final report.

For example, assuming the above conditions have been met, an organization receiving a grant beginning July 2023 would be eligible to receive another grant beginning July 2025.

There are two exceptions to this policy:

- 1) Large "umbrella" organizations, such as universities, that have multiple independent, discrete entities, each of which is under separate executive leadership (such as a school or agency). Such independent, discrete entities that have received funding for a program may not reapply until the conditions outlined above have been met. A different entity may apply for a grant regardless of the funding status of other entities under the same umbrella organization.
- 2) Independent, discrete entities that have separate executive leadership and are linked only by sharing the same fiscal agent. An entity that has received funding for a program may not reapply until the conditions outlined above have been met. A different entity may apply for a grant regardless of the funding status of other entities using the same fiscal agent.

An organization that *did not* receive a grant in a funding cycle is eligible to reapply for a grant for that same project, any other project within the organization, or for general operating funds during the next grant cycle.

Baltimore Women's Giving Circle Grant Process and Schedule

The Circle welcomes grant applications from organizations that meet our granting criteria.

Application Deadline: December 15, 2022 (midnight)

- Emails announcing the RFP (Request for Proposals) are sent in October to nonprofit organizations. If you would like to be on this RFP mailing list, please send an email request to grants@thebwgc.org. We encourage you to sign up a second, or even third person just to be sure of getting our notices. However, being on the mailing list is not a prerequisite for submitting an application.
- Grant applications must be submitted using BWGC's online grant application.
- Applications are accepted during a six-week period that begins on November 1, 2022, and must be submitted no later than midnight December 15, 2022.
- Grantee selections are announced the following May.

Grant Information Sessions will be held via Zoom on **Wednesday, November 2 from 9:30 – 11:00 and Thursday, November 3 from 3:30 – 5:00**. Registration for the sessions will be sent to all organizations on our RFP list. Everyone who registers will receive a link for the Zoom call.

After your grant proposal is submitted, the BWGC grant selection process proceeds as follows:

January: First Round of Reading

- Teams of 6-8 BWGC volunteer grant readers review 6-8 grant applications and determine which applicants will receive a site visit invitation.
- Applicants not selected for a site visit will be eliminated from further consideration and will be notified by email.

February - March:

- Grant Reader Teams conduct site visits to organizations that are being considered for funding. After the site visits, teams determine which projects to recommend for funding to the voting membership. Site visits do not indicate funding will be awarded.
- Applicants eliminated after site visits will be notified by email.
- **NOTE:** Due to COVID 19 site visits were done virtually for the 2021-2022 cycle. In 2023, site visits will be done in person unless public health guidelines dictate otherwise.

April - May:

- Through a voting process, Baltimore Women’s Giving Circle members select their final recommendations for grantee awards.
- Notification emails are sent to successful grant applicants and to applicants not being funded. If funding is denied, applicants may request feedback to make improvements for future applications.

June:

- Grant agreements are sent to successful grant applicants.

Baltimore Women’s Giving Circle Grant Application

Cover Sheet

Here is a summary of the information that will be collected by the online grant application Cover Sheet for both General Operating Funds and Project Funds:

- 501(c)(3) Designation Status
- Program Name or Project Name
- Contact Information - names, titles, email addresses, and phone numbers of three people at your organization who can answer questions about this application
- Organization Website Link
- Amount Requested
- Total Organization Budget Amount
- Project Budget Amount (for Project Application)
- Size of Organization (multiple choice)
- Number of Years in Operation (multiple choice)
- Type of Work (multiple choice)
- Category of Funding Support (multiple choice)
- Population Served (multiple choice)
- Geographic Area Served (multiple choice)
- Ages Served (multiple choice)

Mission and History

Organization Mission Statement (Character Limit: 750)

Brief History of the Organization (Character Limit: 2000)

If you are requesting **Project Funds**, please skip to page 9.

Narrative for Applicants Requesting General Operating Funds

Note to Applicants: Below are the questions as they appear in the Narrative Section of the application. Here, we have included some detailed sub-questions (in italics) for you to consider and may help you to think through your response to the questions on the application. We strongly encourage you to refer to this section of the Guide to assist you with telling your story in this section of the application. **You do not have to answer each of these sub-questions.**

Funding Request Overview

In one or two sentences, briefly describe how you plan to use the funds you are requesting and the anticipated impact you hope to achieve.

Character Limit: 500

Here, you may want to let us know if:

- *You will be targeting any particular line item in your budget, e.g., staff, supplies, small equipment. If so, what?*
- *You will be applying the grant money to the line items with the greatest need over the course of the grant.*

Description of Your Organization

Please address each of the following 3 topics in the text box below.

Issue/Opportunity

- What problem or issue in the community does your organization address? OR
- What opportunity do you see in the community that your organization is poised to respond to?

You do not have to answer both of these questions. Choose the one that best describes your motivation for offering your services or activities.

Activities or Services

- List and briefly describe all of the activities your organization delivers or will deliver to address the problem or issue you identified above.
- Specifically, in what ways does or will your organization assist women and families toward achieving safe, healthy and productive lives or self-sufficiency?

Note: you may consider answering any of the sub-questions below if they are helpful in telling your story:

- *Indicate which, if any, activity would be expanded or new as a result of the grant money you are requesting.*
- *When and how often are these activities or services offered?*

- *What is the number of participants expected to participate in each of these activities or services? Are they the same participants or different participants for each activity or service?*
- *Where do you provide your services or carry out your activities? You may include type of facilities, or specific locations.*

Participants

- Who will participate in your organization’s activities or services?
- How will you reach out to and recruit these participants?

If you are expanding your current services to a new age group or a new community of women, mention that here.

Character Limit: 5000

Staffing

- List the current staff that deliver your organization’s activities. Briefly describe their job responsibilities, their qualifications and experience.

Character Limit: 2000

Partnerships

- What organizations, if any, such as schools, churches or other community organizations or individuals that will help you to deliver your program services or activities?
- If you do have any partners, provide a list of the organizations that will partner with you to deliver your services or activities and describe what each of these partners will do with you.
 - *For example, you might have partners that make referrals to your program activities, provide physical space or training for your staff etc.*

Character Limit: 3000

- Do you or will you have a formal partnership agreement with these organizations?
Yes/No

Program Evaluation & Ultimate Outcomes

Do you or will you evaluate your program activities or services?

- What output or intermediate outcome measures do you or will you track, such as the number of people enrolled in a workshop, number of workshops offered, number of participants completing a workshop, etc.?
- How do you or will you use this information to make improvements to your services?

Remember: these intermediate output measures support your ultimate outcome measures. They do not measure your ultimate outcome, such as graduation rates or obtaining meaningful employment.

What ultimate outcome(s) or intended long-term results do you hope to achieve?

- How will you know that you have achieved these results? Do you or will you track measures, such as number or percentage of participants completing high school or college?
- What information, quantitative (numbers or percentages) or qualitative (testimonials or stories) do you or will you collect to measure your results?

Your ultimate outcome measures show the impact your program activities are having on the issue you describe at the beginning of the narrative section.

Remember, if you are currently not measuring your ultimate outcome(s) or are not collecting information, what are your plans to do so within the time frame of the grant you are requesting?

If you have or will have an external evaluation completed of your organization or a specific program you offer, please be sure to mention that here.

Character Limit: 3500

Importance of the BWGC Grant

In one or two sentences, tell us why this grant is important to you and/or your organization's mission.

Character Limit: 750

For General Operating Funds, please skip to page 11 for guidance on the rest of the application.

Narrative for Applicants Requesting Project Funds

Note to Applicants: *Below are the questions as they appear in the Narrative Section of the application for Project Funds. Here, we have included here some detailed sub-questions (in italics) to consider that may help you think through your response to the questions on the application. We strongly encourage you to refer to this section of the Guide to assist you with telling your story in this section of the application. **You do not have to answer each of these sub-questions.***

Funding Request Overview

In one or two sentences, briefly describe how you plan to use the funds you are requesting and the anticipated impact you hope to achieve.

Character Limit: 500

Description of Your Project

Please address the following topics in the text box below.

Issue/Opportunity

- What problem or issue in the community will your project address? OR
- What opportunity do you see in the community that your organization is poised to respond to?

You do not have to answer both of these questions. Choose the one that best describes your motivation for offering your services or activities.

Activities or Services

- List and briefly describe all of the specific project activities you will be offering to address the problem or issue you identified.
- Specifically, in what ways does or will your project assist women and families toward achieving safe, healthy and productive lives or self-sufficiency?

Note: you may consider answering any of the sub-questions below if they are helpful in telling your story:

- *How are these activities different from what you currently offer?*
- *When and how often are these activities or services offered?*
- *What is the number of participants expected to participate in each of these activities or services? Are they the same participants or different participants for each activity or service?*
- *Where do you provide your services or carry out your activities? You may include type of facilities, or specific locations.*

Participants

- Who will participate in your project activities?
- How will you reach out to and recruit these participants?

Staffing

- List the staff who will deliver the project activities.
- Briefly describe their job responsibilities, their qualifications and experience.

Character Limit: 5000

Partnerships

What organizations, if any, such as schools, churches or other community organizations or individuals will help you deliver your project activities?

- If you do have any partners, provide a list of people or organizations that will partner with you to deliver your project activities and describe what each of these partners will provide or do with you.
 - *For example, you might have partners that make referrals to your program activities, provide physical space or training for your staff etc.*

Character Limit: 2000

- Do you or will you have a formal partnership agreement with these organizations?
Yes/No

Program Evaluation & Ultimate Outcomes

Do you or will you evaluate your project activities or services?

- What output or intermediate outcome measures do you or will you track, such as the number of people enrolled in a workshop, number of workshops offered, number of participants completing a workshop, etc.?
- How do you or will you use this information to make improvements to your project?

Remember: these intermediate output measures support your ultimate outcome measures. They do not measure your ultimate outcome, such as graduation rates or obtaining meaningful employment.

What ultimate outcome(s) or intended long-term results do you hope to achieve?

- How will you know that you have achieved these results? Do you or will you track measures, such as percentage or number of participants completing high school or college?
- What information, quantitative (numbers or percentages) or qualitative (testimonials or stories) do you or will you collect to measure your results?

Your ultimate outcome measures show the impact your program activities are having on the issue you describe at the beginning of the narrative section.

Remember, if you are currently not measuring your ultimate outcome(s) or are not collecting information, what are your plans to do so within the time frame of the grant you are requesting?

If you have or will have an external evaluation completed of your organization or a specific program you offer, please be sure to mention that here.

Character Limit: 3500

Importance of the BWGC Grant

In one or two sentences tell us why this grant is important to the success of your project.

Character Limit: 750

The following sections are the same for General Operating Funds and Project Funds.

Stewardship and Sustainability*

What financing sources or strategies will you pursue as the grant period winds down?

Character Limit: 2000

Institutional Review Board Approval

Does the activity being funded by this grant require Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval?
Yes/No

If yes, what is the timetable for obtaining IRB approval?
Character Limit 1000

Required Attachments

Note: If you do not have the specific document requested below, please attach a Word or PDF document that explains when you will be able to provide the requested information or how the document you are sending is a relevant substitute. If sending an explanation plus a substitute document, please combine into one PDF before uploading.

- Operating or Project Budget: See details below.
- Organization's Financial Statement for the most recently completed fiscal year
- Organization's current year-to-date Financial Statement
- Audited Financial Statement – Most recent compilation, review or audited financial statement, or a copy of the organization's most recent IRS Form 990, if the organization was not required to have an audit conducted.
- Board of Directors/Trustees – Name, occupation, years with organization and percent of board members donating to the organization.
- IRS Documentation of the organization's 501(c)(3) status or that of your fiscal agent

Description/Details for Required Financial Documents Listed Above

Document 1: Operating or Project Budget:

- The operating or project budget should include:
 - income (all committed and anticipated funding) and
 - expenses, itemized by category, e.g., salaries with F.T.E.
- Itemize how the BWGC funds will be spent.
- If applying for a specific project, include a project budget. The project budget should be aligned with the details in the application's narrative section.

The BWGC has provided a link within the online application to a budget template for your use should you need one. If you have your own budget form, please check the template to be sure you have included all the categories listed in the template.

When looking at an organization or project budget, grant reviewers may consider the following:

- Has the organization made efforts to secure funding from other sources?

- Is the budget realistic considering the size of the organization or project?
- Is the budget itemized with reasonable and justifiable costs per item?
- Are the costs reasonable in relation to the number of participants and expected outcomes?

Document 2: Organization’s Financial Statement for the most recently completed fiscal year

This statement of financial activity showing the organization’s *actual* income and expenses allows grant readers to compare actual income and expenses with the organization’s *budgeted income and expenses* for that fiscal year.

Document 3: Organization’s current year-to-date Financial Statement

Document 3 is an interim Financial Statement reporting from the beginning of the current fiscal year to the date of the application submission.

Document 4: Audited Financial Statement.

Applicant must submit an audited Financial Statement, compilation or review, performed by independent auditor. If your nonprofit is not required to have an audit, please submit its most recent IRS Form 990.

Overall, when looking at these various financial documents listed above, grant reviewers are able to determine:

- If the organization is financially sound.
- If there are financial controls in place to support sustainability of the organization or project.

Optional Attachments

- Letter(s) of Partnership Agreement
- Annual Report
- Supplemental Information – *Attach any additional information, such as client testimonials or letters of recommendation*

Baltimore Women’s Giving Circle Grant Post-Grant Activities

The BWGC strives to maintain a strong partnership with grantees. We want to stay in touch to discuss your organization’s or project’s progress, to be aware of any challenges that you may encounter, to provide assistance when appropriate, and to learn about factors that led to your success.

Post Grants Committee

Each grantee will be assigned a team that will serve as the grantee’s liaisons during the grant period. The liaison team will schedule at least one onsite visit at a mutually convenient time midway through the grant period. Grantees are encouraged to have their Executive Director and Project Director (if applicable) present during the liaison team’s visit. At this time, the grantee team and the liaison team will discuss the how grant implementation is proceeding. The BWGC team will also follow up with each grantee periodically until the end of the grant.

At the end of the grant period, all grantees are required to complete a final report within 30 days of the grant’s conclusion. These reports are the source of important information for Circle members about the impact that their funds are making in the Baltimore region.

Grantee Connect

Grantees will also be invited to participate in the Circle’s Grantee Connect activities. These gatherings bring our past and present grantees together to explore topics of common interest and to share their stories. By connecting our grantees, the BWGC hopes to build a stronger network of relationships among area nonprofits. Grantee Connect has also created a list serve for our grant recipients to connect with one another.

Baltimore Women's Giving Circle FAQs for Grant Applicants

What is the size of a typical grant?

Grants are awarded in amounts up to \$25,000. The range of recent grants has been \$3,000 to \$25,000.

What is the duration of a typical grant?

Grant awards are for one year; grant funds must be used within the 12 months between July 1 of the award year and June 30 of the following year.

May use of the grant money be modified during that year?

A grant may be used only for the purpose stated in the grant application. If a situation occurs and a grantee would like to modify how the grant funds will be used, a written request must be sent to, and approved by, the BWGC's Post Grants Committee (postgrants@thebwgc.org).

May an organization apply the next year to continue the grant?

An organization that received a one-year award cannot be funded two years in a row.

Organizations that received funding for a project or general operations may reapply after the following conditions have been met:

- (1) the funds granted have been spent as specified in the grant application, and
- (2) the organization has complied with BWGC's post-grant evaluation process, which includes participating in site visits and/or interviews and submitting the final report.

Assuming the above conditions have been met, an organization receiving a grant beginning July 2023 would be eligible to receive another grant beginning July 2025.

There are two exceptions to this policy:

- 1) Large "umbrella" organizations, such as universities, that have multiple independent, discrete entities, each of which is under separate executive leadership (such as a school or agency). Such independent, discrete entities that have received funding for a program may not reapply until the conditions outlined above have been met. A different entity may apply for a grant regardless of the funding status of other entities under the same umbrella organization.
- 2) Independent, discrete entities that have separate executive leadership and are linked only by sharing the same fiscal agent. An entity that has received funding for a program may not reapply until the conditions outlined above have been met. A different entity may apply for a grant regardless of the funding status of other entities using the same fiscal agent.

An organization that *did not* receive a grant in a funding cycle is eligible to reapply for a grant for that same project, any other project within the organization, or for general operating funds during the next grant cycle.

May an organization submit more than one grant proposal?

No. An organization may submit only one grant proposal per grant cycle.

There are two exceptions to this policy:

1. Large “umbrella” organizations, such as universities that have multiple independent, discrete entities, each of which is under separate executive leadership (such as a school or agency). Each independent, discrete entity under that umbrella organization may submit a grant proposal for the same year.
2. Independent, discrete entities that have separate executive leadership and are linked only by sharing the same fiscal agent. Any such entity may submit a grant proposal for a particular year, regardless of whether another entity sharing the same fiscal agent also applies for a grant.

What information should be contained in a proposal?

If you follow the outline in the Narrative Section of the application you will be able to tell your story by providing us with a complete description of:

- How you plan to use the funds you are requesting and the anticipated impact the grant will have for the mission of your organization or for the viability of your project
- Your organization or project, including:
 - The issue or opportunity you want to address in the community
 - Who will participate in your program, services or project activities and how you will recruit them
 - The activities or services you will provide
 - And most importantly, how your organization or project will align with the BWGC’s mission to assist women and families toward achieving safe, healthy and productive lives or self-sufficiency
 - Your staffing model and/or partners that will deliver the activities or services
- What you hope to achieve as a result of your activities or services you deliver
 - How you measure and communicate those achievements
- There are also a number of required documents
 - Budgets
 - Financial Statements
 - Board of Directors/Trustee Information
 - IRS documentation of 501(c)(3) status

May men or boys be among those benefiting from a grant?

The majority of the funds should benefit women and their children (both boys and girls). Men may not be the primary beneficiaries of a grant.

Does the BWGC offer any multi-year grants?

No, only one-year grants.

What common challenges have prior grantees experienced?

- **Recruitment and Retention:** How will you recruit and retain participants?
- **Childcare:** If young mothers are involved, will childcare be provided while they are participating in a project?
- **Transportation:** Will transportation be a problem for participants, and if so, how will the problem be addressed?
- **Time Schedules:** Do project schedules accommodate participants' schedules?
- **Mental Health and Substance Abuse:** How do you deal with client mental health and substance abuse problems?
- **Start-Up:** Will the project be ready to use the funds when they are awarded July 1 (e.g., project staff and space are secured)?

What is the BWGC grant proposal review cycle and when will our organization know the outcome of its grant application?

January: First Round of Reading

- Teams of 6-8 BWGC volunteer grant readers review 6-8 grant applications and determine which applicants will receive a site visit invitation.
- Applicants not selected for a site visit will be eliminated from further consideration and will be notified by email.

February - March:

- Grant Reader Teams conduct site visits to organizations that are being considered for funding. After the site visits, teams determine which projects to recommend for funding to the voting membership. Site visits do not indicate funding will be awarded.
- Applicants eliminated after site visits will be notified by email.
- **NOTE:** Due to COVID 19 site visits were done virtually for the 2021-2022 cycle. In 2023, site visits will be done in person unless public health guidelines dictate otherwise.

April - May:

- Through a voting process, Baltimore Women's Giving Circle members select their final recommendations for grantee awards.

- Notification emails are sent to successful grant applicants and to applicants not being funded. If funding is denied, applicants may request feedback to make improvements for future applications.

June:

- Grant agreements are sent to successful grant applicants.

If my organization receives a grant, what are the reporting requirements?

- Each grantee will be assigned a team of members of the BWGC's Post-Grants Committee to be its liaison(s) during the grant period.
- Further details may be found in the Post-Grant Activities section of this document.

How can we receive feedback on our application, if our proposal does not advance prior to or after a site visit?

- You may request to receive feedback by contacting us at grants@thebwgc.org
- We will set up a time to meet by Zoom to provide you with feedback that you may find helpful if and when you decided to reapply.