

Tips for Submitting a Grant Application to the City Federation of Women's Organizations (CFWO)

The 15 members of the CFWO board read and evaluate every application. First, we review individually, and then we discuss as a group. The board always has more requests for funding than can be met by available resources and so hard decisions have to be made.

The following tips may be useful as you prepare your grant request for CFWO.

Get Feedback from an Outsider

Asking someone who is not familiar with your work to read your application materials "cold" can help spot gaps in your narrative or items that need more explanation. You want to find out if these questions can be answered easily:

- What is the impact of this project on women and girls in Tompkins County?
- Is the list of and timeline for activities covered by the grant logical and complete?
- If criteria for evaluating success of the project are included (it's best if they are), do the evaluation methods seem appropriate and insightful?
- Why is this project necessary in Tompkins County right now?
- Who will be helped by the project and how do you know they will find it/use it/benefit. Is there research or other groundwork that makes you believe your efforts will be successful?

If your idea is new or unfamiliar, have you included good details to clarify your vision, demonstrate your planning and explain why this innovative solution is likely to succeed?

Include a Clear and "Readable" Budget

The budget info you submit with your project should be able to be understood by someone who doesn't "speak" finance.

- Is it clear exactly what you'll spend the CFWO funds on?
- Does the spending amount and rate make sense?
- If you're willing to accept partial funding of your request, is it easy to see how your project will be scaled or which portion can be funded by a partial CFWO grant?

If You are an Organization with a Large Budget or Access to Other Funding

We seek opportunities where our funding is key rather than a drop in the bucket.

We **often** fund projects for organizations with lots of other funding, but the successful applications from these groups have clear detail showing how the funding from CFWO will allow for completion of a specific aspect of their work.

If Your Organization isn't Specifically Focused on Women and Girls

We do accept requests from organizations that also help men and boys. If your organization doesn't have an exclusive focus on women and girls, you might consider the following.

- Ask for funding for a project that **focuses** on women and girls.
- Clarify how the funding you request from CFWO will be used for women and girls. For example, if a program offers six scholarships, your grant request might cover three spots which will be reserved for female applicants.
- Pay extra attention to the budget to be sure CFWO board members can understand how you are targeting the support we provide to women and girls.

Show How Your Project Connects

Many of the projects funded through CFWO grants are a piece that connects to a broader picture. Some projects have a historical context, for example, replacing an outdated item of infrastructure that has a track record of community use. Other projects are one component of a larger effort, for example, funding childcare for women taking college courses. Other projects provide scaffolding for next steps, for example, paying outstanding court fees to allow women to apply for financial aid. When the funding provided by CFWO is part of a broader effort, the impact is multiplied. Including the larger context in which CFWO funding will be used can be helpful.

Obvious Tips Checklist

We know that putting together grant applications can be stressful and so we include this list to help you be sure your application makes a good impression.

- Proofread for clarity and clean writing. If writing isn't your "thing," ask a friend or colleague to read it over.
- Check your math. Does the budget clearly account for the requested funding?
- If you're reusing or repurposing a grant narrative, be sure you've edited it. Double-check that the years/dates and organization names are correct.
- Include all of the requested detail and the necessary signatures.
- If you're submitting photocopies, be sure that they are legible.
- If you're including extra items such as testimonials or images, label them clearly so we know what they are and why they're included.
- If you've received funding in the past year, you may have an obligation to turn in an interim or final report. The board reads these reports eagerly, so make sure it's included. ([Details of which grants need final reports and due dates are on our website.](#))
- Check the deadlines and be sure to submit on time.

Please remember that we receive more funding requests than we can accommodate. Funding in one year is not a guarantee for future years. Nor does non-funding in one year create a pattern for future years.

If you have further questions about the grant application, please contact CFWO/WBC by email - grants@womenbuildingcommunity.org