



Prospective Grantee Guide

Priorities For Systemic Change

The goal of the Fund for Women and Girls is to implement systems level change furthering gender equity in Chester County and beyond. The Fund for Women and Girls defines systemic change as follows:

- 1) **Change in policy:** Change in local (municipal, school district, county), state or federal policy. Examples include:
 - a) County ordinance to establish Human Relations Commission
 - b) Local zoning board policy to increase affordable housing
- 2) **Change in practice:** Change in a system's processes or way of providing services (that involve multiple organizations or entities). Examples include:
 - a) Training police departments on lethality assessment process
 - b) Training direct service staff to provide individual services with an understanding of systemic barriers
 - c) Utilizing hiring practices known to improve the gender wage gap.
- 3) **Change in culture:** Influencing public awareness, understanding, and opinion. Examples include:
 - a) Educational campaign to shift opinions regarding reproductive rights
 - b) Educational campaign to build pro-immigrant (and pro-female) public sentiment

The Fund has established the following priorities for systemic change:

- 1) **Equity In Education:** We envision a community where every student is empowered to thrive through equitable access to resources, opportunities, and support — including fair funding, high-quality instruction, inclusive materials, mentorship, meaningful representation, and a learning environment that removes barriers and uplifts each student's full potential.
- 2) **Health & Safety:** We envision a community where everyone has access to quality, affordable healthcare, including mental health care, reproductive and birthing care, and gender-affirming care, as well as overall safety and well-being, including safety from gender-based violence, intimate partner violence, sexual assault and sex trafficking.
- 3) **Economic Stability:** We envision a community where everyone has the opportunity to earn a living and equitable wage (as of June 2025 \$46.62/hour for 1 adult with 1 childⁱ), including access to quality, affordable childcare, safe and reliable transportation and affordable housing.

Current Initiatives

The Fund has further focused our work through the following current initiatives and/or programs:

Paid Family Leave

1 in 4 employed mothers return to work in 10 days or less after giving birth for financial reasons. There is currently legislation (called the Family Care Act) in both the PA House of Representatives and PA Senate that would create a public paid leave program in PA. This program would allow employees in PA who qualify to take paid time off through a state program in approved situations such as bonding leave (childbirth, fostering, and adoption), having or having a family member with a serious medical condition, or having experienced or having a family member who experienced a qualifying act of violence. The Fund is leading a Chester County grassroots campaign in addition to partnering with a statewide coalition to advocate for this legislation.

Vote16PA

The goal of Vote16PA is to codify the rights of 16- and 17-year-olds in Pennsylvania to vote for school board candidates in municipal elections. Through this student-led program and with support and guidance from The Fund staff, participants are leading and participating in the political process by learning about how a bill becomes a law – not just the internal actions during the legislative process, but how to build coalitions and gain the public support that is needed to make policy change.

Empower Her Vote

Empower Her Vote is a civic and voting engagement initiative that doesn't just focus on elections – it focuses on the role of government and the impact of elections. The goal of our Empower Her Vote initiative is to make civic and voter engagement not only accessible to all, but to take away the mystery and provide valuable information and resources so that everyone can meaningfully participate in our democracy.

General Grant Requirements:

The Fund for Women and Girls has established the following requirements for all grantees:

- 1) **Alignment:** The organization's mission and work must align with The Fund's systemic change priorities and/or current initiatives.
- 2) **Governance:** The organization must have a board of directors with defined term length and limits, and a conflict-of-interest policy or be willing to do so.
- 3) **Nonprofit Status:** The organization must have valid 501(c)3 status with the IRS or be fiscally sponsored by an organization that does.
- 4) **Fiscal:** The organization completes an annual 990 (if required by the IRS) and an annual financial audit or reviewed financial statements or be willing to do so.

- 5) **Human Rights Commitment:** The organization must be able to demonstrate a commitment to the Human Rights for All Statement included as an addendum to this guide.

Types of Grants

General Partner Grants:

For the upcoming grant cycle, General Partner Grants will range from \$5,000 – 10,000 and will be for one year.

Recognizing that many of our current and former grantee partners are primarily focused on direct services, our goal through the General Partner Grants is to provide general operating support for those services while leveraging the grantee's constituencies in support of one or more of The Fund's current initiatives. Grants will be prioritized based on the following:

1. **Programmatic Initiative Alignment:** The extent to which the organization's current programs and services align with the goals of The Fund's current initiative(s).
2. **Systemic Change:** The extent to which the organization's communications indicate an understanding of the systemic barriers that impact the clients served by the organization (i.e. Understanding of how racism, sexism, heterosexism, xenophobia, classism, and ableism play out in everyday life.).
3. **Degree of Impact:** The extent to which the organization's programs and services demonstrate impact related to The Fund's priorities (breadth & depth).
4. **Greatest Need:** The extent to which the organization's programs and services address the needs of those experiencing the greatest impact of the issues mentioned in The Fund's priorities.
5. **Financial Viability:** The extent to which the organization balances fiscal responsibility with the need to invest resources in their mission.
6. **Governance:** The extent to which the organization's board represents the diversity of The Fund's target audience.

Application Process: For this next year, The Fund will primarily focus on organizations with a history of previous grants from The Fund for Women and Girls. We will not be accepting unsolicited proposals. If your organization's work aligns with The Fund's priorities for systemic change and/or one or more of our current initiatives, you can reach out to Executive Director, Cheryl Brubaker at cbrubaker@thefundcc.org for a conversation. If sufficient resources are available, Fund staff will work with you to gather documentation for the general grant requirements as well as information specific to the type of grant. We anticipate board approval of grants in May of 2026.

Gender Equity Grants

Gender Equity Grants will be provided to organizations who are directly partnering with The Fund in the implementation of one of the Fund's programs or initiatives. These grants will range from

\$5,000 - \$15,000 and will be for one year, with the possibility of renewing for a second year, should the initiative require it.

Application Process: If you are interested in partnering directly with The Fund on any of the initiatives or programs listed above, please contact our Director of Advocacy and Policy, Blake Emmanuel at bemmanuel@thefundcc.org. New partners will be considered as funding and staff capacity permits.

Advocacy Project Grants

Advocacy Project Grants may be requested to support a specific advocacy project designed to address a systems level change as defined above and aligned with the Fund's priorities for systemic change.

Application Process: Applications for advocacy projects will be accepted on a rolling basis and will depend upon the funds available. To find out if funds are available and to submit an application, please contact Executive Director, Cheryl Brubaker at cbrubaker@thefundcc.org. Upon receipt of the application, the approval process will take approximately 3 months to complete.

Our goal is to invest in local nonprofits providing essential services for women and girls while tackling the deeper, systemic barriers to gender equity. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we shift our grantmaking process to align with the organization's strategic priorities.

ADDENDUM: Human Rights for All Commitment Statement

At The Fund for Women and Girls, we stand firm in our convictions that;

- Everyone deserves to live safely and with community as their authentic self and;
- No one should be subjected to discrimination based on their gender, gender identity, or expression (including transgender status, pregnancy, childbirth, and pregnancy-related conditions), ability status (mental or physical), age, ancestry, citizenship or immigration status, color, faith, genetic information, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, race, service in the military, parental status, or any other protected characteristics.
- Human rights issues are deeply connected to intersectionality, as individuals possess multiple identities that shape their experiences in the world, including but not limited to those mentioned above.

We are committed to ensuring a more equitable future for everyone facing gender discrimination; cis women and girls, trans individuals, and nonbinary/gender non-conforming adults, youth, and children. We will continue to work towards gender equity, social justice, civil rights, and fundamental freedoms of all.

We believe human rights includes;

- The right to health and wellness including;
 - Reproductive rights
 - Healthcare access and affordability
 - Gender affirming care
 - Privacy
 - Affordable and accessible mental health care
 - Affordable and accessible maternal / birthing person care
- The right to safety and freedom from;
 - Gender-based violence
 - Domestic violence
 - Lack of privacy
 - Unjust deportation
 - Unjust law enforcement and judicial practices
 - Sex trafficking
 - Sexual harassment
 - Unsafe environments
- The right to fair labor practices and livable wages including;
 - Safe workspaces
 - Livable wages
 - Freedom from child labor
 - Fair wages
 - Freedom from work trafficking

ⁱ MIT Living Wage Calculator, <https://livingwage.mit.edu/>