



RFP 2026

Grant Information Session



Lisa Attonito ~ Kosana Stojcevic
June 8, 2026
Virtually, Via Zoom

Agenda

- Mission/Vision
 - Equity vs Equality
 - Social Change vs Social Service
- Landscape in Greater Milwaukee
- Organizational Elements, History and Background
 - Advocacy
 - Programming/Events
 - Grants: Annual, Special and Flash
 - HER Scholarships
- Cycle: Process, Guidance, Priorities
- Important Dates
- Grant Partners, Expectations
- Q and A

Act. Lead. Change



Vision



We envision Greater Milwaukee as a place that is committed to the well-being and advancement of women. It shines as a beacon of progress where all women, girls, and gender-expansive people thrive and realize their full potential.



Mission

Driving lasting change for gender equity.



Equity vs Equality

Equality is based in being equal, **equity** takes differences into consideration.

Equality sounds fair, **equity is fair!**

Social Change

Not Social Service

- Protecting rights.
- Removing obstacles.
- Addressing systemic issue, root cause.
- Long process, time consuming.
- Slow to see/experience results.



Social Service

- Basic needs: Food, clothing, shelter.



Organizational Landscape

It's complex.

Across our region, women-focused organizations take many forms, each serves an important but different purpose.

- **Service Providers**
- **Membership Organizations**
- **Philanthropy Circles**

Our Unique Pulse

Our presence in the organizational landscape is far-reaching.

Everyone is welcome.

Engagement is valued and essential.

Programming is curated.

Donations are essential, no requirements.

Every gift matters.

- Philanthropy is about giving annually, intention, and in alignment with personal values.

We're wide...anyone, any business or foundation, can make financial gifts.

We're narrow...all about women, girls, and gender expansive people.



History and Background

- Started in 1986, independent in 2006.
 - Celebrating 4 Decades this year!
 1. **Claimed philanthropic space.**
 2. **Identified problems, funded solutions.**
 3. **Deepened knowledge, inspired action.**
 4. **Engaged community, expanding influence.**
 - Collective impact, significant gifts.
 - Availability of resources, permanently.
- First grant in 1989; every year since.
- Grants exclusively focused on gender equity.
- Women's Funding Network, 1990.
- Creating community with *Women in Public Policy* launched in 1991.
- First HER Scholarship in 1996.

Creating ripples of change...



Organizational Elements

- ★ Advocacy
- ★ Programming (aka Events)
- ★ HER Scholarships
- ★ Grants: Annual, Special and Flash
 - ★ WF Civic Breaks (Est 2026)
 - ★ WF Laundry Nights (Est 2024)
 - ★ WF Prime Time 4.0 (Est 2025 and formerly known as WF Launch Lab)
 - ★ Collaborations Galore!
 - ★ Women's Night at the Theater (Est 2017)
 - ★ Lightning Talks
 - ★ Community Program: Retirement with a gender lens, How to buy a business.
 - ★ Cultures of Giving, Giving Circles
 - African American Women's Fund, Latinas en Acción, and Lesbian Fund
 - ★ Fiscal Agent: Denim Day MKE, Women In Design

No funder raiser event per se!



Grant Making

- Started in 1989.
- More than \$3M granted.
- More than 150 Organizations; More than 350 Grants.
- Exclusive for equity for women and/or girls.
- Three kinds: Annual, Special, and Flash.

Annual Grants

- Formal, competitive process.
- Typically 6 – 10 Grants annually.
- Grants range \$5,000 - \$20,000.
- Mode: \$5K and \$10K.

(Only 5 greater than \$25K)



Grant Partners, Annual 2026

Chayil, Inc.

Havenwoods Neighborhood Partnership

HIR Wellness Institute, Inc.

Kids Impact Community

League of Women Voters

LOTUS Leal Clinic

Lynden Sculpture Garden

Milwaukee Public Schools Foundation

Mujers con Poder de Transformacion Social

Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin

Souls to the Polls

Saint Joan Anitda High School

Wisconsin Women's Network

Summary 2026

- 13 Partners.
- Invested more than \$100K.
- Range \$5k - \$15K.
- 4 first time Partners.
- No multi-year grants made.



Guidance and Insight

- We know the issues, talk about YOUR work/plan.
- Must focus on advancing equity for women/girls.
- Segmented programming, services, etc. for women/girls easier to understand, *not* required.
- Metro Milwaukee.
- Willing to take risks.
- Patient.
- Results matter, effort is important too.
- Range of \$5,000 - \$20,000.



Who?

- Must be a 501 c(3), or utilize a fiscal agent.
- Grassroots or well-established entity.
- Chapter of national organization or local entity.
- Small or large.
- Only grantee or among others.
- Mission work in Greater Milwaukee.



What?

- Seed funding, capacity building, programs, evaluation, projects, collaborations, and research.
- Something with observable outcomes or innovation.
- One-time project, on-going program, or operational.

Limitations

- Endowments, debt reduction, individuals, fundraising events (including sponsorships,) campaigns to elect candidates, and programs that promote religious or sectarian activities.

Organizational Priorities

Core

1. Personal Safety.
2. Bodily Autonomy.
3. Civic Engagement.

2025 - 2027

1. Gendered mis/disinformation, especially online.
2. Economic literacy and financial well-being.



Grant Priorities

Economic Security and Financial Well-Being

- Increase economic literacy.
- Build generational wealth.
 - Safe and affordable housing; Access to quality education; Effective money management.
- Support entrepreneurship and business ownership.
 - Neighborhood development; Access to capital; Ecosystems for better pathways to success.
- Promote pay equity.
 - Career development; Legitimate opportunities for higher-paying jobs; Representation in leadership and leadership priorities.
- Address paid leave and recognition of unpaid care work.

Desired Outcomes: Smarter decisions, greater civic engagement, and increased critical thinking.



Process...Two Phases

Preliminary

- No supplementary attachments.
- Basic information and data.
- Focus on what you want funded.
- Keep it simple...draw direct line for clarity.



Full Proposal, Review and Invitation Only

- Go deep on what you want funded.
- Budget, funding.



Important Dates



Preliminary Application Opens

Application via Women's Fund website

Friday, June 12, 2026

Preliminary Applications Due

Monday, August 10, 2026
11 AM

Notification of Invitation to Apply

Applicants are notified of status and invite for submission of a Full Application

TBD, September 2026

Full Application Due

TBD, October 2026
11:59 PM

Applicants Notified of Status

Week of December 14, 2026

Grant Checks Distributed

January 2027



Expectation of Grant Partners

- Accept grant with signature.
- Photos and quotes requested.
- Mid-year update; on-going communication encouraged.
- Final Evaluation due in January.
- Be ready to explain what was successful and what was learned.
- Honesty essential.



Sharing with Q and A

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Thank you!

