

Washington Women's Foundation

Grant Notebook



Washington Women's Foundation
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WWF Grant Notebook

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Section 1: Introduction

In 1996, its inaugural year, the Washington Women's Foundation and its 116 members together made a single \$100,000 grant to Mothers Against Violence in America. Seventeen years and over \$6 million later, the essential grant making framework remains the same: a participatory, democratic process that empowers the members themselves to conduct the research, due-diligence and assessment of nonprofit organizations in order to make strategic grants that improve our community.

This Grant Notebook embodies the six-month 'curriculum' that guides this process.

Preview

Pooled Fund Grant Committee Guiding Principles

The core values of **impact**, **inclusion**, **collaboration** and **education** guide the work of the WWF Pooled Fund Grant Committee.

The Pooled Fund Grant Committee selects programs or projects that will achieve significant **impact** in our communities. We research issues, trends and needs, and the organizations addressing those needs. Committee members evaluate invited proposals in a coordinated and consistent manner, nominating finalists that will positively affect the lives of many people broadly, or affect a smaller number of people very deeply. The Impact Assessment Committee follows up with every grantee for each year grant funds are disbursed, in part to monitor success in achieving stated goals.

It is important that Pooled Fund Grant Finalists reflect the breadth of member interest, and WWF promotes **inclusion** of all members in the grant process. No prior experience is necessary to serve on the Pooled Fund Grant Committee. We also encourage all members to nominate organizations for consideration by the Work Groups. At the end of the process, Grant Committee members evaluate the grant process, forwarding best practices and suggestions for the next grant cycle.

Traditionally, approximately 60 WWF members have participated in the Pooled Fund Grant process in a variety of roles – all working closely over a six-month period to create a slate of 10 Finalist organizations. The full membership then votes for five of those organizations to receive Pooled Fund Grant Awards. In this way, all WWF members **collaborate** on the selection of awardees.

The in-depth grant selection process is intended to **educate** the Foundation's members to become more knowledgeable philanthropists. For Washington Women's Foundation, the educational process of *how* grants are awarded is as important as the grant awards themselves.

Pooled Fund Grant Committee Guidelines

DESCRIPTION OF POOLED FUND GRANT PROCESS

Beginning in January of each year, five Work Groups convene to identify giving priorities, compile data, and analyze information on organizations of interest in each funding area. (Organizations interested in making the Pooled Fund Grant Committee aware of their work are invited to submit a Letter of Inquiry form for possible review by the Work Groups.) The Work Groups then select a total of 25 organizations (five for each Work Group) to receive a formal request for proposal, or RFP. **No unsolicited grant proposals are accepted.** Of the 25 proposals received, 15 (three in each Work Group area) are selected for site visits. After site visits, 10 Finalists are chosen by the Pooled Fund Grant Committee for a ballot that is sent to the entire WWF membership for a vote. Five organizations (one from each Work Group area) receive Pooled Fund Grant Awards each June. Award amounts depend on the size of the Pooled Fund and the voting results.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Washington Women's Foundation Pooled Fund Grants fund projects that address at least one of the following criteria:

- **Response to urgent and critical need;**
- **Bold new venture; and/or**
- **New approach to time-worn problems.**

The Foundation funds broadly – it does not limit funding to women's causes. It funds organizations that, in the opinion of WWF members, are able to make the best use of \$100,000. Grantee organizations may be small or large, as long as the proposal funded meets one or more of the criteria.

WWF Pooled Fund Grants are awarded to five organizations each year, one in each of the following funding areas: Arts & Culture, Education, Environment, Health and Human Services.

ELIGIBILITY

- Only organizations that qualify as 501(c)(3) entities under the Internal Revenue Service code, and who provide services in the state of Washington, will be considered for funding.
- Funding for special projects, capital campaigns and operating expenses are considered.
- Funding requests for endowments will not be considered.
- Washington Women's Foundation will not consider funding organizations that exclude any person from agency services, employment or volunteer participation, that engage in unlawful discrimination on the basis of age, race, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation or religious belief, or for any other discriminatory reason, nor any organizations that serve an exclusively sectarian purpose.
- Organizations that have previously received a WWF Pooled Fund Grant Award are again eligible for consideration if it has been *a minimum of five years* since the initial grant award.