

Community First Grant Program

Frequently Asked Questions



What is the Community First Grant Program?

The Community First Grant Program is an initiative designed to support Team Members in the U.S. and Canada who are engaged with community partners increasing access to fresh, healthy food in neighborhoods with few options. Whole Cities will offer \$5,000 grants to qualified community partners recommended by Team Members.

How does it work?

The program has a simple two-step application process:

1. A Team Member in the U.S. or Canada completes an application in support of a community partner focused on food access or healthy cooking classes in their city.
2. If the Team Member's application is selected, then the Community Partner is asked to complete a Community First Grant Application.

To learn more about the program, visit the Community First Grant Program page here www.wholecitiesfoundation.org/community-first

How do I apply?

1. **Talk** with the Community Partner you are recommending, let them know about the program, and ask if they are interested.
2. **Make sure** that you can answer "yes" to all of the eligibility requirements before applying.
3. **Ask** your STL/FTL/TL to complete the Leadership Support Form and send it to grants@wholecitiesfoundation.org by **June 15**. If you do not work in a store, please ask your Team Leader to complete the form.
4. **Start** the application from our [website](#). Tell us about yourself, your team, your store or office, your city, and the community partner you are recommending. You will need to create a login and password to access the application. You can save your application and come back to it before completing.
5. **Complete** your application by 11:59pm CST on **Saturday, June 15th**.

Who can apply?

Team Members and Community Partners must meet the **eligibility criteria** below to be considered:

Team Members

- Must be a current WFM **Team Member in good standing**.
- STL (Store TMs), FTL (Facility TMs) or Team Leader (Regional & Global Offices) must submit a **Leadership Support Form**. If you do not work in a store, please ask your Team Leader to complete the form.

- Must be able to volunteer personal time to their recommended Community Partner **outside of working hours at WFM**. No compensation will be provided by WFM or WCF.
- Must **complete a Team Member Community First Grant application by June 15**.
- Must be willing to **submit a short mid-year and end of year update** about how you and other Team Members have engaged with your community partner's work.

Community Partners

- Must be a **501c3 nonprofit** organization.
- Must focus on expanding **fresh, healthy food access or provide healthy cooking classes to families and neighborhoods with limited options**
 - WCF supports community partners who are locally led with leadership that reflects and engages those being served. We support community partners that strengthen self-reliance and self-determination.
 - We generally **do not support food banks** and other food redistribution projects.
 - We generally do not support projects focused primarily on children or schools.
 - For examples of qualified community partners, please click [here](#).
- Must complete a **Community First Grant Application**
 - This simple application will include questions regarding the community partner's work, leadership, impact, community engagement, long-term plans, and finances.

What is the application timeline?

May 1: *Team Member Community First Grant application opens*

June 15: *Team Member Community First Grant application and STL/FTL/TL Support Form due*

August: *Notification sent to Team Member applicants*

Team Members will be notified if their application has been selected.

If selected, your community partner will be asked to complete a grant application.

September: *Community Partner Community First Grant Application due*

This application will include questions regarding the Community Partner's mission, programs, leadership, impact, community engagement, sustainability, and finances.

November: *Notification sent to Community Partner applicants*

Community Partners will be notified if they qualify for a grant. Team Member applicants will receive notification if their Community Partners have been approved.

Can I apply if I have already participated in the Community First Grant Program?

Yes! We welcome applications from Team Members who are brand new to the program as well as those who would like to participate again.

What is a "community partner"?

A community partner is a non-profit organization that is led by community members in your city. A community partner understands the assets, needs, and goals of local residents and uses this knowledge to direct and shape its work.

Can I recommend a Community Partner who has already received a grant from Whole Cities?

Whole Cities can provide funding to eligible Community Partners even if they have participated in all 3 years of Community First Grant funding. We focus on funding capital investments to support the long-term success and self-sufficiency of a program well after our grant concludes.

Do other Team Members need to be involved with the community partner for me to apply?

We have seen amazing results when Team Members work collectively with community partners. Only one Team Member needs to complete the application, however, projects are more successful when multiple people are involved. It is important that Team Members are not pressured into volunteering and that they understand that WFM and WCF will not provide compensation for the time they spend volunteering.

Can individual Team Members receive funding from Whole Cities Foundation?

No. We do not award grants to individuals. However, a nonprofit organization led by a Team Member would be eligible to apply for funding.

Does my community partner have to be a 501c3 nonprofit organization?

WCF can only award grants to qualified 501c3 nonprofit organizations or organizations that are partnered with a 501c3.

What if our team wants to volunteer for a community partner but needs help finding one that is a good fit?

Please send us an email at grants@wholecitiesfoundation.org.

Why do I need my STL/FTL/TL to complete a form?

Projects thrive when multiple Team Members are engaged. Your STL (Store TMs), FTL (Facility TMs) or Team Leader (Regional or Global Offices) needs to be aware and supportive of your efforts to involve other interested Team Members in your community partner's project. It is important that Team Members are not pressured into volunteering and understand that WFM and WCF will not compensate for volunteer time.

Can Team Members outside the United States apply?

Yes! The opportunity to nominate a community partner is open to Team Members in the U.S. and Canada.

Can Team Members who work outside the stores complete a Community First Application?

Yes! We welcome applications from all Team Members located in the U.S. and Canada who meet the eligibility requirements.