

Women's Giving Circle

EMERGENCY RESPONSE NETWORK

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED
Year Round



www.cfhoco.org

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A colorful illustration of a town scene with various buildings, trees, and a clock tower. A sign in the foreground reads "HOWARD COUNTY".

HOWARD COUNTY

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The Mission of the Women’s Giving Circle, a fund of the Community Foundation of Howard County, is to build a community of philanthropists and create a permanent legacy that address the needs of women and girls in Howard County.

Women's Giving Circle: Emergency Response Network

The Women's Giving Circle ("WGC"), a fund of the Community Foundation of Howard County ("Foundation"), offers grants to organizations serving girls and women in Howard County, whose programs (1) increase the life skills of women and girls; (2) encourage the healthy development and personal authority of girls; (3) develop and/or foster the long term emotional strength of girls and women; and/or (4) contribute to the long term self-sufficiency of girls and women.

Once an organization has gone through the Women's Giving Circle application process described in these Guidelines, they become eligible for funding.

The *ERN Program Guidelines* are available for download at www.womensgivingcircle.org.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE NETWORK OVERVIEW	Allows nonprofits to request emergency funding to assist a female client. All requests must include a description of the need and the amount of funding desired.
Nonprofit Restrictions	Human Service Organizations
Award Amount	Up to \$1,000 per request, no annual cap
Expenditure Period	Within 30 days of receipt of funds
Reporting	A note of appreciation from client

Applicant Qualifications

Nonprofits that want to become a Partner in the Women's Giving Circles ERN must meet the following conditions:

- Are determined as charitable under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code;
- Deliver services to women and/or girls who are residents of Howard County;
- Provide programs and services to the intended beneficiaries without discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, disability, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran or military status, pregnancy, ancestry, age or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, county or local laws, regulations or ordinances; and,
- Previously funded organizations are up-to-date on any report requirements.

Common Questions

Can organizations who are waiting for 501(c)(3) tax status apply? No. This program is not seeking applications from organizations that have not received an IRS Letter of Determination.

Are new organizations eligible? No, the program will not consider applications for organizations that have recently received their IRS Letter of Determination.

Can programs that provide service to specific populations be considered? Yes, organizations that offer gender-based programs or have programs and services designed to benefit a specific population will not be considered discriminatory for this reason alone.

Can programs that provide faith-based services be considered? Yes, as long as the organization does not discriminate against a participant on the basis of religion or religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to actively participate in a religious practice. Any specifically religious activity or service made available to participants by the organization must be voluntary, as well as separate in time and location from Foundation funded activities and services.

Submitting an Application

Acceptance Period

Nonprofits may request to become a partner of the ERN at any time throughout the year. To be considered, a complete electronic application and all associated attachments must be sent to WGCERN@CFHoCo.org.

Application Categories

Nonprofits may submit applications in one of the following categories:

(1) **FAST TRACK APPLICATION**

This option is available to nonprofits that have an ongoing relationship with the Foundation and have received funding via the Community Grant or Mini-Grant program in the last three years.

(2) **FULL APPLICATION**

This option is available to nonprofits that do not meet the “Fast Track” requirements.

Applicants must provide the following via email:

- A copy of their IRS Letter of Determination;
- A description of the organizations Mission and Vision;
- Provide a response to “How does the organization serve women and girls?”; and
- Be available for site visit or meeting, as requested.

Applications that do not adhere to the Program Guidelines will not be considered for participation in the ERN.

How Are Applications Evaluated?

Criteria

The WGC wants to partner with organizations:

- Addressing a significant need affecting Howard County women and girls;
- With sound management and administration, including a clearly defined and effective governance structure and financial systems; and
- Demonstrating the ability to mobilize resources including financial support, in-kind support and volunteers to sustain programs.

Process

The Foundation staff pre-screens and reviews all applications received. Only complete applications are forwarded to the WGC Grant Committee, which is comprised of individuals from the WGC membership.

On occasion, the Foundation staff may request additional information for more extensive evaluation by the WGC Grant Committee. Foundation staff and a WGC Grant Committee member may conduct site visits or telephone interviews for applications selected for more extensive evaluation. After thoughtful deliberation, the WGC Grant Committee will “approve” or “decline” an applicant’s request for participation in the ERN.

Notification of Decision

Foundation staff will provide written notification of decisions to all applicants. **Fast Track** applicants will be notified within 30 business days of submitting an application. **Full Application** applicants will be notified within 45 business days of submitting an application.

Foundation staff is available to address questions about the process or status of your application.

Network Participation Requirements

Participation in the Emergency Response Network (“ERN”) allows pre-qualified nonprofits to request up to \$1,000 in emergency funding, per request, to assist a female client residing in Howard County. All requests must include a description of the need, a description of why the client is in need and the amount of funding desired (rounded to the nearest whole dollar).

Requests for assistance will be considered using the following criteria:

- Will providing assistance allow the person to remain or become economically self-sufficient?
- Is this a sudden and unexpected event that threatens the person’s ability to remain self-sufficient?
- Will this assistance make a significant impact on the person’s life?
- Will this one small investment resolve the situation the person is facing?
- Have all other avenues of funding been considered? And if so what are the obstacles being faced?
- If assistance is needed to cover the initial costs of an ongoing expense, has the person shown they have the ability to cover the subsequent payments?

Examples of requests the WGC considers include:

- A single car repair that supports the person’s ability to continue working.
- Medical or dental expenses, that are not otherwise covered by insurance, which left untreated, threaten the wellbeing of the person.

- Moving expenses that support the person's ability to leave an abusive home.
- Rental security deposit that supports a person's ability to provide a safe and stable home for themselves and their family.

Examples of requests the WGC does not consider include:

- The purchase of alcohol, cigarettes, and other non-essential health or grocery items.
- Costs associated with entertainment, such as paid television, Netflix, etc.

Nonprofits will receive a funding decision within 15 business days.

Nonprofits participating in this program will be required to enter into a written agreement that outlines how the program works, how funds will be disbursed, reporting and site visit requirements, as well as funding recognition.

The funds will be disbursed to the nonprofit and restricted for the benefit of the client and emergency specified in the request. The funds are to be utilized within 30-days of receipt and any unused portion of the grant is to be returned to the Foundation. Within 60 days of the receipt of the grant, and prior to the next emergency assistance request, the nonprofit will provide an accounting of how the funds were disbursed and a note of thanks from the client.

Questions? Contact Us

The Foundation staff is available to assist you throughout this process and welcomes your questions and comments. Please contact the Foundation's Director of programs, Tracy Locke-Kitt, by phone, 410-730-7840 or via email, WGCERN@CFHoCo.org.