



Women's
Foundation
of MINNESOTA

JULY 2009

GROWING EQUALITY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS



girlsBEST Planning Grant

Guidelines and Online Application Instructions

THE WOMEN'S FOUNDATION OF MINNESOTA established girlsBEST (girls Building Economic Success Together) in 2001 after a listening tour in 14 Minnesota communities. Through the girlsBEST Fund, we make grants to programs that increase the readiness of girls to achieve future economic well-being with a focus on underserved and underrepresented girls.

girlsBEST is a multi-year funding program that includes planning grants and multi-year grants. We are currently accepting applications for planning grants in anticipation of the next three-year cycle of funding.



Planning Grants



Purpose of Planning Grants

Planning grants may result in the creation of a proposal for a girlsBEST multi-year grant and/or to seek additional funding from other sources that will:

1. Plan new programming to increase the readiness of girls to achieve future economic well-being.
2. Strengthen the economic focus of an existing program for girls incorporating aspects of the girlsBEST framework.

Size of Planning Grants

Planning Grants will range from \$3,500- \$5,000.

Duration of Planning Period

February 1, 2010 to April 30, 2010

Eligibility

- Only programs that demonstrate a strong focus on girls' economic development will be considered for funding.
- Only proposals that demonstrate how girls are involved in all aspects of the program (including planning, implementation and evaluation) will be considered.
- Programs must serve girls between the ages of 10 and 18 years.
- Programs must be located in Minnesota and may include non-profit organizations, American Indian Nations, schools, and other tax-exempt organizations. Unincorporated organizations may apply but must have a tax-exempt fiscal sponsor.
- Priority is given to underrepresented and underserved girls.

Technical Assistance

Planning grant recipients will receive one-on-one and group technical assistance to help them create a program plan using the girlsBEST framework that can be used for their application for a Multi-year Grant.

Multi-Year Grants

A separate request for proposals for multi-year grants will be available in March 2010. Multi-year grants will be awarded for up to three years of funding, renewable each year based on evidence of satisfactory progress toward goals and outcomes. The application process for multi-year grants will be open to planning grant recipients as well as other organizations whose work meets the criteria of the girlsBEST Fund.

Understanding girlsBEST framework

A. girlsBEST Outcome

girlsBEST grants are for programs focused on achieving the following outcome:

- Individual girls will increase readiness to achieve economic well-being.

B. The Stages of Girls' Economic Development

Through the evaluation of previous grantee programs, three stages of girls' economic development have been identified that advance girls' economic well-being over time:

1. **STAGE ONE | Awareness:** Girls become increasingly aware of the ways in which women are treated unequally in our society due to sexist practices that are embedded in institutions and policies, which in turn affects their economic potential.
2. **STAGE TWO | Agency:** Girls become aware that they can become agents of change, in their girlsBEST programs, through their personal leadership and participation in program activities to increase their economic well-being.
3. **STAGE THREE | Activism and Advocacy:** Girls become aware that they can take action, individually and collectively, to impact systems and institutions to promote women's equality and their future economic success.

C. girlsBEST Program Tracks

The girlsBEST fund supports programs in five program tracks. Applicants will choose one program track that best describes their work with girls:

1. Academic Programs:

- Programs that help girls stay in school and pursue college and future career goals.
- Programs that build girls' financial and economic capacity.
- School-based programs that help girls excel in math, science and other subjects from which girls have traditionally been excluded or under-represented.

2. Entrepreneurial Programs:

- Programs that teach and support girls in business planning and development, and how to run a business.

3. Employment Development and High-Paying/High-Skill Careers:

- Programs that build girls' employment skills and/or encourage them to pursue high-paying and high-skill careers.

4. Public Education and Advocacy Programs:

- Programs in which girls organize on particular issues that impact their economic success, such as teen-pregnancy prevention or ending violence.

5. Sports and Arts:

- Programs that use the arts or sports to develop girls' leadership and increase their ability to achieve economic success.





D. girlsBEST Notable Practices

Evaluation of grantee programs has also demonstrated that programs that are successful in developing the economic potential of girls share some notable practices:

1. **Mentoring: creating supportive environments for girls.** Building supportive environments leads to increased readiness of girls to achieve economic well-being. Mentoring from women in the community who can serve as cultural and/or professional role models for girls helps build girls confidence and economic readiness.
2. **Diversity: working with underserved and underrepresented girls.** Underserved and underrepresented girls throughout Minnesota will build economic power and benefit from girlsBEST funding. Funding is prioritized to girls of color, immigrant girls, girls in greater Minnesota, low-income girls, LBT (lesbian, bisexual, transgender) girls, and disabled girls.
3. **Leadership development that leads to girl-driven programs.** Girls are involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of girlsBEST programs. Programs build girls' leadership by allowing girls to design and implement program strategies and take activist roles in the community.
4. **Cultural and community awareness: helping girls gain self-confidence and self-esteem by building cultural and community awareness.** Projects that focus on helping girls build self-esteem within their cultural traditions and community identities, where appropriate, have been found to enhance girls' leadership skills and self-confidence.
5. **Collaboration.** Building collaborative relationships in communities, with schools, religious institutions, non-profits, and community agencies that build the status of and for girls, and strengthen girls' programs and economic readiness in communities throughout Minnesota.

How to Craft Your Proposal

As part of the online application process, you will be asked to provide the following information. The answers you provide to the questions in each category represent your full grant proposal. Answers for each question must not exceed 250 words.

For applicants who need it, a “Save and Finish Later” option is available at the end of each online application page.

1. Organization Description

Please provide the following information:

- A brief summary of your organization’s mission and history.
- A discussion of your key accomplishments.
- A description of your work with and commitment to girls.
- A description of your organization's capacity to undertake the proposed program.
- Explain how the proposed project aligns with the strategic direction of your organization.

2. Description of Planning Activities

- Provide a brief description of your program.
- Describe the girls who will be involved in your program including number age, geographic location, race/ethnicity, and socio-economic background.
- Describe your planning activities including a timeline for the three-month planning period.
- Describe the ways girls will be involved in the planning process.

3. Applying the girlsBEST Framework

Outcome

- How will your program increase the readiness of girls for future economic well-being?
- If this is an existing program, what will be different about your program at the end of the planning period in terms of building girls’ economic readiness?

Program Tracks

- Which girlsBEST program track applies to your program? (*select one*)
- Why have you chosen this program track?

Notable Practices

Mentoring: Creating supportive environments for girls.

- How will your program utilize mentoring?
- In what other ways will you build a supportive environment for girls?

Diversity: Working with underserved and underrepresented girls.

- How will underserved and underrepresented girls benefit from your program?

Leadership development that leads to girl-driven programs.

- How will your program develop girls’ leadership?





Cultural Awareness: Helping girls gain self-confidence and self-esteem by building cultural awareness.

- How will your program develop girls’ cultural awareness?

Collaboration

- Will you be collaborating with other organizations as part of your program?

4. ADDITIONAL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

On the final page of the online application, *before clicking the “Review & Submit button,”* you must attach the following documents:

- Women’s Foundation Diversity Survey (USE FORM SUPPLIED BY THE FOUNDATION)
- Project budget and narrative (USE FORM SUPPLIED BY THE FOUNDATION)
- Current organizational budget
- Copy of most recent audited financial statement or IRS Form 990
- Copy of your 501(c)3 determination letter or determination letter of your fiscal sponsor
- List of current board members
- Copy of your organization's strategic plan.

If your group does **NOT** have one or more of these documents, or if you have questions or concerns, please contact either:

- Charlotte Flowers, program officer, at (direct) 612-236-1807, (toll-free) 888-337-5010, or charlotte@wfmn.org.
- Sida Ly-Xiong, associate director of evaluation and research, at (direct) 612-236-1803, (toll-free) 888-337-5010, or sida@wfmn.org.

Proposal Submission

Application Deadline: October 15, 2009

All applications **MUST BE COMPLETED ONLINE** at the Women's Foundation's website at www.wfmn.org by 5:00 p.m. on October 15, 2009.

*Applications mailed to the Women's Foundation of Minnesota will **NOT** be accepted.*

Contact Information

Throughout the application process, Women's Foundation staff is on-hand to help you! Please contact us with questions, clarification or assistance, anytime:

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