



Request for Proposals

POTTSTOWN COMMUNITY VOICES GRANT FUND (PCVGF): *By Residents, For Residents*

**Applications Due:
Friday, March 1, 2024, at 11:59 pm EST**

Application information can be found at <https://pottstownfoundation.org/grantmaking/community-voices-grant-fund>

Applicants should submit their proposals to the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation using the link below.

Application Link:

<https://goapply2.akoyago.com/pottstownfoundation/Identity/Account/Login?ReturnUrl=%2Fpottstownfoundation>

Executive Summary

Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation (PAHWF) invites nonprofit organizations and programs to apply for a competitive grant opportunity to support and bolster the health and wellness of Pottstown, PA residents.

In July 2003, the PAHWF was founded as the result of the sale of Pottstown Memorial Medical Center to Community Health Systems. PAHWF enhances the health and wellness of area residents, providing education, funding, and programs that provide equitable access and opportunities for all residents to adopt healthy lifestyles. It serves the residents of Pottstown Borough and those within a 10-mile radius of downtown Pottstown. Since 2003, PAHWF has awarded \$55M to area nonprofits and municipalities to support early childhood development, school programs, youth preparedness, parks and playgrounds, and healthcare access programs.

In 2022, PAHWF surveyed the community to gather information about the health and well-being of residents who live in neighborhoods with long-term disinvestment. Information obtained from the survey informed PAHWF's community response which includes a participatory grantmaking process. This participatory grant, the Pottstown Community Voices Grant Fund (PCVGF) will be overseen by an advisory council comprised of Pottstown residents who will review and grant \$100,000 to address community needs highlighted in the community survey.

This participatory grantmaking process is intended to empower community residents by giving them the ability to invest in solutions that will impact their own neighborhoods and neighbors.

OVERVIEW

The Pottstown Community Voices Grant Fund (PCVGF) will provide funding that focuses on solutions to long-term disinvestment within specific areas of Pottstown. A PCVGF Advisory Council comprised of Pottstown community members will review and evaluate all applications and recommend grant funding decisions to PAHWF. A total amount of \$100,000 will be awarded in 2024.

FOCUS AREAS AND COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

PAHWF convened two groups of community members in the summer of 2023 which included adults and youth participants. These community conversations allowed the residents to identify several key focus areas that will be prioritized for the first year of funding. The PCVGF aims to support the health and well-being of the community by investing in programs/projects that affect residents in one or all of the following ways:

- Access to Parks/Recreation/Green Spaces
- Positive Mental Health Solutions
- Neighborhood Safety and Security
- Housing
- Eliminating Barriers to Employment

Community members offered insights and ideas on ways that grantees can address the focus areas. These solutions are listed below (bulleted list in each focus area) and while the council welcomes all grant applications that impact the focus areas, attention will be paid to any solution that addresses one or more of the ideas brought forth by community members.

Access to Parks/Recreation/Green Spaces

When residents have safe access to open spaces, parks, and recreational activities, health and well-being are promoted. Additionally, a community is built when individuals from diverse backgrounds come together in common places and spaces.

- Access to parks, natural lands, and open spaces including water access
- Expand activities that are available for adults
- Recreation and exercise opportunities for youth
- Support for physical spaces that invite all community members to come together (parks, community centers)

Positive Mental Health Solutions

Improving the mental health of residents directly influences positive quality of life outcomes.

- Increasing access to mental health care
- Holistic approaches to promote mental wellness
- Community building programs and initiatives to support positive social connections
- Youth programs for positive mental health development
- Mental health programs and resources for parents

Neighborhood Safety

When residents don't feel safe in the community in which they live, they cannot thrive. Neighborhood safety is a fundamental aspect of the health and well-being of a community.

- Programs that address gun violence
- Programs that support youth violence prevention
- Physical infrastructure improvements including street lighting and the lighting of alleyways, street improvements, the repair of walkways, additional fencing, sidewalk repair, litter clean up
- Programs that build positive connections with law enforcement

Housing

Belonging to a healthy community includes the ability to live and thrive in a place you call home.

- Long-term (non-emergency) support for renters/homeowners
- Lead / Asbestos removal initiatives
- Programs that help homeowners with repair projects and ongoing maintenance (pest control, window repair, HVAC)
- Programs that increase pathways to home ownership
- Innovative solutions for increasing affordable housing

Eliminating Barriers to Employment

Productive, meaningful employment that provides a living wage is essential to leading a healthy life. By eliminating barriers to employment, the community promotes its own health and well-being and sees positive upward mobility for all.

- Mentorship & educational support for youth
- Internships
- Hard and soft skills development programs
- Entrepreneurial investment

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS AREA

The focus of this competitive grant opportunity is to provide programs and services that will directly affect neighborhoods in Pottstown with historic disinvestment. The Census Block Groups that participated in the 2022 Pottstown Community Survey are highlighted on the map in Appendix A. Grant applications should focus on these neighborhoods and their residents. Applicants will be asked to explain how their proposed program/project will create meaningful change in these communities.

USE OF FUNDS

The PCVGF is interested in funding programs and projects that are solutions-based. As such, funds are provided for organizations whose outcomes impact the specific focus areas and can clearly articulate how residents will benefit.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF A QUALITY APPLICANT

Quality applicants should be able to demonstrate that they possess the following attributes:

- They are committed to a thriving, healthy, successful future for Pottstown
- They are committed to collaborations and partnerships within the community
- They are representative of the communities they serve
- They are informed by the community and invested in community participation

AWARDS AND SELECTION PROCESS

A total amount of \$100,000 will be awarded through the PCVGF grantmaking process. Applicants can request up to \$15,000. Applicants can only submit one request per organization.

The PCVGF Advisory Council made up of Pottstown residents will oversee the grantmaking decision process. All applicants will be screened for eligibility and focus alignment. Qualified applications will proceed to the full Council for review using a scoring rubric (outlined in Appendix B). Applications scoring the highest will be discussed and voted on by the Council for funding.

PAHWF Participatory Grant Request for Proposals

TIMELINE

Applications will be accepted from February 1, 2024, to March 1, 2024. All applications must be submitted via the online application portal by Friday, March 1, 11:59 p.m. EST. Please access the application portal early to avoid any last-minute issues.

The PCVGF Advisory Council will review applications from March through May 2024.

Grant awards will be announced in June 2024.

The grant period begins July 1, 2024, and ends June 30, 2025.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Grantees will be required to check in with a PCVGF Advisory Council in lieu of a mid-term report.

Grantees will be required to attend an end of the grant term meeting to participate in an interactive conversation with the PCVGF Advisory Council including an update on the impact of grant funding.

ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITIES

Organizations do not have to be located within the geographic focus area to be eligible for a grant, but the program/project to be funded must serve geographic focus area residents (Appendix A). Priority will be given to organizations that apply for solutions-based awards that directly solve one or more of the specific issues/ideas proposed by community members.

501C3 STATUS

PAHWF serves non-profit organizations with tax-exempt status in good standing with the IRS, which strive to promote priorities that are in line with their mission. Organizations applying for these competitive grants must be 501(c)(3) organizations and will be required to submit their Employer Identification Number (EIN) to verify their status. See below for a full list of documents that must be submitted with each grant application.

APPLICATION

A copy of the application questions is available in Appendix C.

The application can be accessed via the following link:

<https://goapply2.akoyago.com/pottstownfoundation/Identity/Account/Login?ReturnUrl=%2Fpottstownfoundation>

If you should require additional assistance with the online application portal, please contact Jill Kauffman, PAHWF Grants Manager, jkauffman@pottstownfoundation.org. The PCVGF aims to be as inclusive as possible and will assist applicants when appropriate.

ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE INELIGIBLE TO APPLY

The Foundation does not support the following:

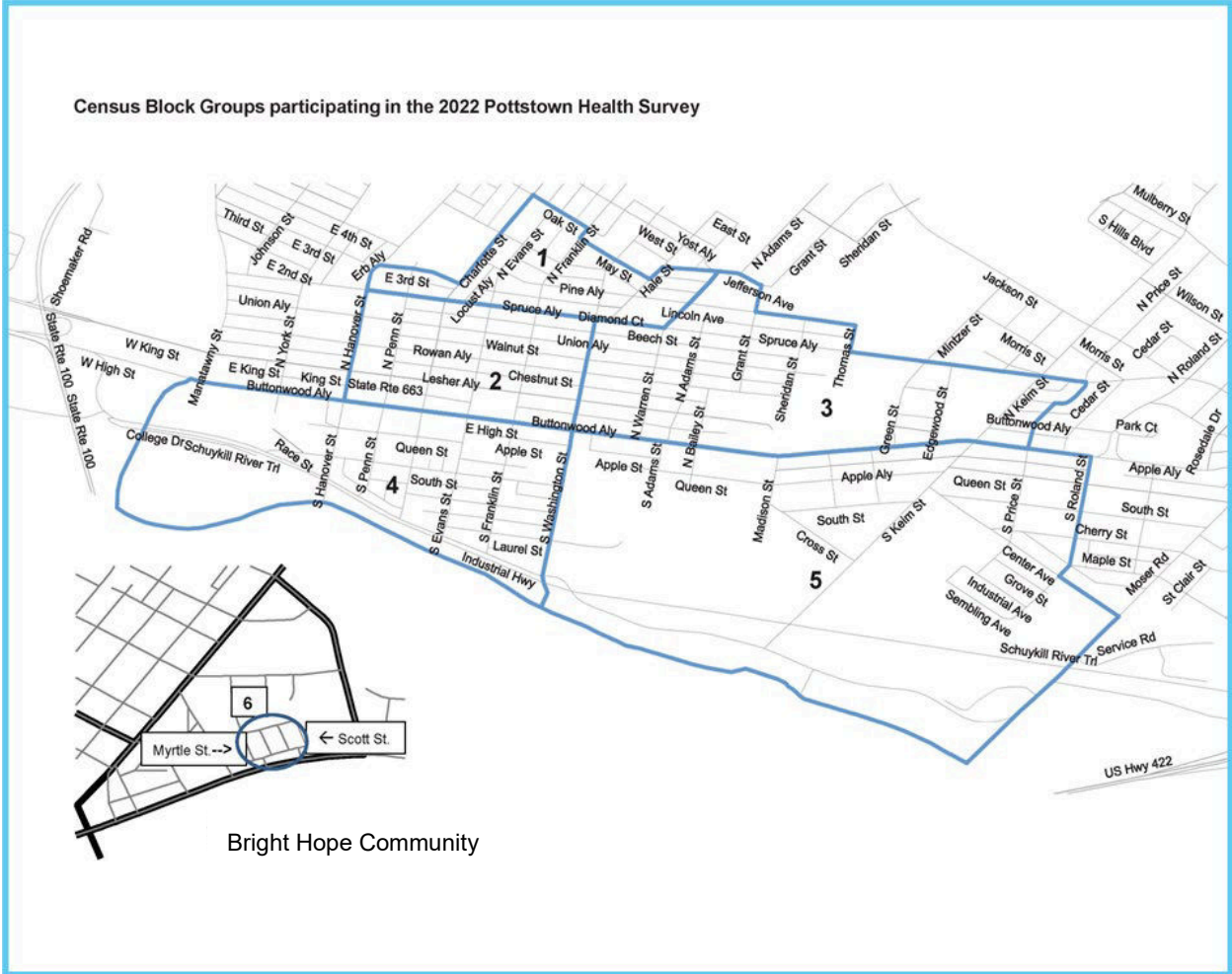
- Alumni Activities
- Debt Reduction or Loans
- Disease-Related Charities
- Endowment Contributions
- Individual Medical Bills
- Political Campaigning
- Lobbying Activities
- Scholarships

Faith-Based Organizations

PAHWF believes in the power of faith-based organizations to bring our community together. The Foundation requires any faith-based organization seeking grant funding to partner with other faith-based organizations to make an impact in one or more of the focus areas. Applications that demonstrate a commitment to working collaboratively are required. Please feel free to reach out to the Foundation with questions.

APPENDIX A

Geographic Area



APPENDIX B

SCORING RUBRIC

Below is an overview of the scoring rubric that reviewers will use to evaluate applications.

Rubric Sections	Possible Points
Geographic Area Alignment	25
Focus Area Alignment	25
Addressing Solutions from the Community	10
Community Involvement	10
Collaboration & Partnerships	10
Program/Project Impact	10
Data Driven Responses (use of data sources including the Pottstown Community Survey)	10
Total	100

APPENDIX C

Application Questions

Title of the Program/Project:

1. Provide a brief summary of your program/project that will serve as your elevator pitch. (500 characters)

2. What is the requested amount of funding from this grant?

Applicants may apply for up to \$15,000 in funding. The total amount of funding to be distributed for the 2024 grant cycle is \$100,000.

3. What is the total budget of the organization?

4. What is the total budget of the program/project?

The Pottstown Community Voices Grant Program aims to support the health of the community by investing in programs/projects that affect residents in one or all of the following ways --

- Access to Parks/Recreation/Green Spaces
- Positive Mental Health Solutions
- Neighborhood Safety and Security
- Housing
- Eliminating Barriers to Employment

5. What categories does your program/project support? Check all that apply.

- Access to Parks/Recreation/Green Spaces
- Positive Mental Health Solutions
- Neighborhood Safety
- Housing
- Eliminating Barriers to Employment

6. Is your program/project –

- New
- Existing
- Expands on an existing program/project
- Brings an existing program/project to the geographic focus area

PAHWF Participatory Grant Request for Proposals

7. What age categories are impacted by the program/project? Check all that apply.
 - Infants/Pre-School
 - School-Aged Youth
 - Young Adults
 - Adults
 - Seniors
8. Provide a brief background of your organization including history, mission, and vision. (2000 characters)
9. The Pottstown Community Voices Grant Fund aims to invest in solutions-based programs/projects. What problem does your program/project aim to solve? (2000 characters)
10. How many people within the focus area will be directly impacted by this program/project during the grant period?
11. Describe the program/project in detail including how it will be delivered to residents of the geographic focus area. (4000 characters)

While not a prerequisite to receiving funding, points will be given to programs/projects incorporating Pottstown residents or organizations within its development and/or execution.

12. How have you or how will you incorporate the Pottstown community, or residents to develop your program/project? (2000 characters)
13. How will you define and measure the impact of your program/project? (2000 characters)
14. Are there any other organizations providing similar programs/projects and if so, how is this program/project different? (1000 characters)
15. List the key partners or individuals that are vital in delivering the program/project. (1000 characters)
16. What is your vision of a healthy, thriving Pottstown community and how does your program/project help promote that vision? (2000 characters)
17. Is your organization representative of those you serve? If so, please provide details. If not, how are you making strides to become representative of those you serve? (1000 characters)
18. Provide an example of how your organization has historically shown a commitment to the residents of Pottstown. (1000 characters)