



Request for Proposals

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

**Applications Accepted:
Wednesday, April 1, 2026**

**Applications Due:
Thursday, April 30, 2026, at 11:59 pm EST**

Applicants should submit their proposals to the Pottstown Regional Community Foundation [here](#).

Additional information about the fund can be found [here](#).

Executive Summary

Pottstown Regional Community Foundation (PRCF) invites nonprofit organizations and fiscally sponsored programs to apply for a competitive grant opportunity to support and bolster the health and wellness of Pottstown, PA residents.

PRCF connects donors, partners, and community leaders with the community's greatest needs, investing in systemic change that improves health outcomes, expands educational access, and builds pathways to economic stability for all residents. Since 2003, PAHWF has awarded \$58M to area nonprofits and municipalities to support early childhood development, school programs, youth preparedness, parks and playgrounds, and healthcare access programs.

In 2022, PRCF 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 PRCF's community response which includes a participatory grantmaking process. This participatory grant, the Pottstown Community Voices Grant Fund (PCVGF) is overseen by an Advisory Council comprised of Pottstown residents who will review applications and allocate funds 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.

FOCUS AREAS AND COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

In the fall of 2025, the Pottstown Regional Community Foundation (PRCF) embarked on a Data Collaboration project with organizations who gather and use data on Pottstown community needs related to social determinants of health. This group identified community needs common across their data sets. During December 2025 and January 2026, Strategy Arts conducted Community Input Interviews as part of the research process leading up to the second round of the Participatory Grant process. The purpose of these interviews was to bring additional perspectives from Pottstown Residents to the information gathered from the series of Data Collaboration convenings. The residents serving on the Advisory Council of the PCVGP used the information from both processes to identify several key focus areas that should be prioritized.

The PCVGP aims to support the health and well-being of the community by investing in programs/projects that affect residents in one or all the following ways:

- Positive Mental Health Solutions
- Neighborhood Safety and Security
- Education Support
- Eliminating Barriers to Employment
- Support for Residents with Chronic Conditions

Positive Mental Health Solutions

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Mental health is both a critical health issue and a community priority in Pottstown. Local providers report that nearly 25% of their patient population has been diagnosed with depression or a mood disorder, and residents described increasing stress tied to economic instability, safety concerns, and chronic health conditions. Social isolation is also a significant concern: in some census tracts, 35–50% of older adults live alone, and several areas score well below average on the Social Engagement Index, which measures civic and community connection. These indicators point to elevated risks of loneliness, depression, and reduced access to informal support networks – particularly among seniors. Youth and adults alike identified mental health as one of the most important issues facing the community, linking it to feelings of anxiety, hopelessness, and difficulty managing daily responsibilities.

The Council is seeking solutions that support:

- Community programs and initiatives that encourage positive social connections
- Community programs for older adults

Neighborhood Safety and Security

Neighborhood safety is a foundational health issue in Pottstown – because residents can't benefit from parks, services, or daily routines if they don't feel secure moving through their community. While about 90% of residents live within a 10-minute walk to a park, local data shows that 30% do not feel safe walking to a park, and residents also described feeling unsafe walking through other parts of town due to intimidation, fights, and the threat of violence. Community members also raised concerns about neighborhood conditions that can reinforce stress and insecurity – such as poor lighting, public substance use, and the concentration of smoke/vape-related businesses – underscoring the need to invest in solutions that improve both real and perceived safety.

The Council is seeking solutions that address:

- Increased safety in the borough, especially in and around parks

Education Support

Education is a critical pathway to long-term economic mobility and health, yet data show persistent disparities impacting Pottstown students. Preschool participation is lower than the surrounding region, despite the availability of programs such as Pre-K Counts and Early Head Start – suggesting barriers in access, awareness, or enrollment processes. Importantly, residents shared that they found early education too expensive to afford for their young children and explained that, though there are free options for those that qualify, the process to gain access to those options is time consuming and confusing. The borough's Child Opportunity Index score is approximately 62 overall, with some areas as low as 12, reflecting limited educational and developmental supports in certain neighborhoods. Teachers and schools are described as deeply committed but under-resourced.

The Council is seeking solutions that support:

- Mentoring and support for school studies

Eliminating Barriers to Employment

Residents describe poverty as the overarching condition that influences all other aspects of life. Economic stability is foundational to health and opportunity in Pottstown, yet significant barriers

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limit residents' ability to access and sustain employment. The borough's poverty rate is nearly 20% - well above the 12% state average – with many residents earning below the living wage. Families described the “benefits cliff,” where modest wage increases can result in the loss of essential supports such as SNAP or housing assistance, discouraging advancement. These challenges disproportionately affect households with children (up to 30% of youth under 18 are living in poverty in some areas) and older adults, many of whom rely solely on fixed incomes.

The Council is seeking solutions that address:

- Barriers to employment for adults with children, and older adults

Support for Residents with Chronic Conditions

Chronic health conditions are significantly more prevalent in Pottstown than in many surrounding communities, creating long-term impacts for individuals and families. Local data show higher rates of stroke, high blood pressure, heart disease, COPD, and asthma compared to state and national averages, with asthma affecting approximately 11% of residents. Diabetes impacts 9% of residents overall, with some census tracts exceeding 12%, and providers believe many additional cases remain undiagnosed. Community partners also report that nearly one in four patients are diagnosed with depression or a mood disorder, underscoring the overlap between physical and behavioral health. Residents shared lived experiences of struggling to manage conditions like diabetes, highlighting how chronic illness can limit employment, increase stress, and reduce overall quality of life.

The Council is seeking solutions that address:

- Community-based solutions to support residents with chronic conditions, especially diabetes (i.e., healthy food, physical activity, rides to appointments, translation services)

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

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- They are representative of the communities they serve
- They are informed by the community and invested in community participation

AWARDS AND SELECTION 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.

TIMELINE

Applications will be accepted from April 1, 2026, to April 30, 2026. All applications must be submitted via the online application portal by Thursday, April 30, 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 May through mid-June 2026.

Grant awards will be announced in June 2026.

The grant period begins July 1, 2026, and ends June 30, 2027.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Grantees will be required to attend a Meet & Greet at the beginning of the grant term to participate in an interactive conversation with the PCVGF Advisory Council.

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

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).

501C3 STATUS

PRCF 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.

The Foundation does not support the following:

- Alumni Activities
- Debt Reduction or Loans
- Disease-Related Charities

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- 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.

APPLICATION

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

The application can be accessed via this [link](#):

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

APPENDIX A

Geographic Area

Census Block Groups participating in the 2022 Pottstown Health Survey



Bright Hope Community

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	15
Focus Area Alignment	15
Fills a Gap in 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
Representative of the Communities they Serve	10
Committed to a Thriving, Healthy, Successful future for Pottstown	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.*
3. What is the total operational 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 the following ways:

- Positive Mental Health Solutions
 - Neighborhood Safety and Security
 - Education Support
 - Eliminating Barriers to Employment
 - Support for Residents with Chronic Conditions
5. Which category does your program/project support? Select that PRIMARY category.
 - Positive Mental Health Solutions
 - Neighborhood Safety and Security
 - Education Support
 - Eliminating Barriers to Employment
 - Support for Residents with Chronic Conditions
 6. Which other categories, if any, does your program/project support? Select all others that apply.
 - Positive Mental Health Solutions
 - Neighborhood Safety and Security
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7. Is your program/project –
 - New
 - Existing
 - Expands on an existing program/project
 - Brings an existing program/project to the geographic focus area
8. What age categories are impacted by the program/project? Check all that apply.
 - Infants/Pre-School
 - School-Aged Youth
 - Young Adults
 - Adults
 - Seniors
9. Provide a brief background of your organization including history, mission, and vision. (2000 characters)
10. What problem does your program/project aim to solve? (2000 characters)
11. Describe the program/project in detail including how it will be delivered to residents of the geographic focus area. (4000 characters)
12. How many people within the focus area will be directly impacted by this program/project during the grant period?
13. How have you or how will you incorporate the Pottstown community, or residents to develop your program/project? (2000 characters)
14. How will you define and measure the impact of your program/project? (2000 characters)
15. Are there any other organizations providing similar programs/projects and if so, how is this program/project different? (1000 characters)
16. List the key partners or individuals that are vital in delivering the program/project. (1000 characters)
17. What is your vision of a healthy, thriving Pottstown community and how does your program/project help promote that vision? (2000 characters)
18. 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)