



CAPACITY BUILDING FUND

GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

GUIDELINES

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GUIDELINES

The Raymond John Wean Foundation is committed to strengthening Mahoning Valley nonprofits in sound operations, thoughtful strategy and strong leadership to better achieve their missions. We view capacity building as a process to reach new levels of organizational effectiveness.

The Capacity Building Fund provides consultation and technical assistance in the capacity elements of:

- **Leadership**
The capacity of organizational leaders to inspire, prioritize, make decisions, provide direction and innovate (board governance, organizational leadership/effectiveness, etc.)
- **Adaptability**
The capacity of a nonprofit organization to monitor, assess and respond to changes (strategic planning, evaluation, collaborations and partnerships, etc.)
- **Management**
The capacity of a nonprofit organization to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources (fund development, organizational processes, etc.)
- **Operations**
The capacity of a nonprofit organization to implement key organizational and programmatic functions (communication strategy, infrastructure, etc.)

1.1 WHO CAN APPLY

Funding is available to organizations who are:

- Tax-exempt nonprofits under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code;
- Primarily working within the Foundation's [strategic priorities](#) of:
 - Community Revitalization
 - Economic Opportunity
 - Educational Opportunity
 - Public Sector Leadership
- Non-discriminatory of race, religion, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, age, national origin or disability; and
- In compliance on all terms and conditions of any previous Foundation funding and/or grant.

1.2 APPLICATION SCHEDULE

- Submission for Capacity Building Fund consideration can be requested at any time.
- Learning visits and calls may be necessary to make funding decisions.
- Applicants will be notified of the decision within two (2) weeks after all documentation requirements are met.

1.3 ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS

Successful participation starts with an honest assessment of your own organizational readiness. An underlying philosophy that informs our consideration of applications is that nonprofit capacity building work is not easy work and the level of benefit to organizations directly correlates to the level of time and effort invested by organizations. We expect that applicants approach this work with the understanding that, even with the use of a consultant/technical assistance provider, staff and board members should be adequately prepared for their role and responsibilities to ensure the work has value.

1.4 FUNDING LIMITS AND PROJECT DURATION

- Requested [budgets](#) should be realistic and feasible according to the purpose and scope of the project; requests for funding may not exceed \$25,000.
- Duration is specific to the purpose and scope of the project. A typical range is 12 to 18 months. There is no minimum or maximum term.
- Only one (1) Capacity Building Fund project can be open at a time.

1.5 MATCHING REQUIREMENTS

Funding of capacity building projects includes required matching funds. Foundation funding requires a match of at least 50% of the total request amount. This can be seen as an opportunity for organizations to invite other donors to partner in a meaningful way towards their organizational development.

Matching funds for capacity building funding may consist of any combination of:

- In-kind contributions made to the applicant organization solely for support of the project, including:
 - Donated services, including staff time, dedicated to the project
 - Donated materials and supplies
 - Donated or loaned equipment
 - Donated or loaned rental space not owned by the applicant
- Cash contributed to the project by the applicant organization solely for support of the project including:
 - Fees paid directly to consultants
 - Materials, supplies and equipment purchased exclusively for the project
 - Rental fees for equipment and space
 - Contracted services
 - Cash from partners
 - Salaries and wages of applicant and partner staff dedicated to this project
- External cash contributions from donors and/or third parties solely for the support of the project in the form of grants, gifts or bequests.

1.6 CONSULTANTS/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

Consultants/Technical Assistance providers are important partners of the Capacity Building Fund.

The following principles shape the Foundation's perspective on providers. We seek to:

- Raise awareness and appreciation among nonprofits about the role and benefit of working with providers to strengthen their organizations and community impact;
- Encourage consistency and promotion of best practices in provider services; and
- Respect existing relationships between organizations and providers.

The role of providers in projects will vary. Consultants may work independently or in teams to analyze organizational strengths and challenges, provide objective perspectives on current issues and future trends and facilitate strategic discussions among organizational staff and board members. Technical assistance providers add expertise in discrete areas of nonprofit management such as legal issues, technology, human resources, financial management and fund development systems.

A proposal, including the scope of services and professional fees for each provider, must be submitted at the time of application. We require that the organization interview at minimum two (2) providers in their selection process. Release from this requirement can be requested if these conditions are met:

- The organization has been working with a particular provider and is requesting funds for continued and/or similar work; or
- The organization has engaged the provider in the past for similar work. Similar work is defined as work that requires the same skillset or knowledge expertise.

We expect, and may request documentation to support, these criteria for selected providers:

- Complies with certification/licensure requirements as applicable;
- A minimum of two (2) years of recent experience in nonprofit consulting capacity; and
- Demonstrated skill and effectiveness in stated areas of practice per two (2) references.

If funded, an agreement will be developed between the Foundation and the provider based on the scope of services and professional fees specified in the application. As identified in the application, the project director, will be responsible to manage the project including approving all provider invoices to be forwarded to the Foundation for payment; thus ensuring the quality and timely execution of the work.

Please note:

- The Foundation does not endorse or recommend providers; however, recommendations from other nonprofit organizations having engaged in similar projects can be made.
- To guarantee the integrity of the Capacity Building Fund, there must be no conflict of interest in connection to the proposed project provider(s) including the following associations: 1.) relatives, using reasonable judgment; 2.) employment relationship; 3.) membership; 4.) volunteer association; and/or 5.) other types of involvement, using reasonable judgment. In the event a situation constituting a conflict of interest arises, you agree to inform the Foundation, without delay.

1.7 FUNDING EXCLUSIONS

The Raymond John Wean Foundation does not support the following projects and expenses:

- Overhead expenses including: insurance, taxes, administrative fees, employee benefits and site operating expenses (see matching funds)
- Conferences or one-time events
- Purchases of capital equipment, buildings or land
- Repayment of loans or debt service
- Political or religious purposes
- Costs associated with social events, annual fund campaigns or fundraising activities
- Retroactive funding for activities undertaken before the start of the proposed funding period

1.8 EXPECTATIONS

Your board and staff members are expected to:

- Attend the [Race, Equity and Inclusion Training: Two-day Phase I Workshop](#) led by the Racial Equity Institute, LLC of Greensboro, N.C., within the next 12 months, at no charge to your organization. Unmet expectations will be considered in future Foundation funding.
- Attend [Capacity Building Events](#) – learning opportunities designed to inspire, share practices and develop connections.

Upon project completion, funding recipients are expected to furnish The Raymond John Wean Foundation with:

- Comprehensive final reports from project providers;
- Summary of benefits or value gained from the funding – up to two pages;
- Provider assessment(s); and
- [Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool](#) report: 18-24 months post-project.

Funding by the Foundation is intended strictly for the use described in the application and are expected to be completed in the proposed timeframe. If you receive funding and find that you cannot implement your project as proposed, you must immediately communicate any desired changes to the project and its timeframe to the Foundation - all changes are subject to approval prior to affected funds being expended.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

2.1 HOW TO APPLY

If on the basis of a careful review of these guidelines you believe that your organization is a strong candidate for funding, we ask that you submit an online application.

- If this is the first time you've used our [online application](#) at the Foundation, you will be asked to set up an account and provide your IRS Tax Identification Number.
- If you have an established account, you will be asked for your password to either access [existing application](#) drafts or to open a new application.

Once your account has been established, you can log in and print the application using the "printer friendly" button in the top right-hand corner.

At any time during the application process, you can select the "Questions" link to send an email to Foundation staff.

Please note: Be sure to select the "Save and Finish Later" button when you are finished working on your application in order to save your current session's work.

2.2 ASSESSMENT

The most effective capacity building begins with a thorough assessment of the current needs and assets of a nonprofit organization which, in turn, informs future capacity building goals.

- Proposed projects must be derived from priorities identified through the required completion of the [Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool](#). Findings will identify your organization's capacity strengths and challenges, assists in establishing capacity building goals and inform Foundation staff.
- Future completion of this assessment tool will provide reflection on your organization's achievements; how its priorities may have shifted over time; and identify new capacity goals.

2.3 APPLICATION CHECKLIST

The application and all required attachments must be received at the time of submission. You may use the [Application Checklist](#) to collect the documentation to ensure a complete application and prompt processing.