

Westmoreland County 2023 Human Services American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Program Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the purpose of the Westmoreland Human Services ARPA Grant Program?

Grants are intended to address the ongoing public health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Westmoreland County residents. Westmoreland County will award funding to nonprofits for innovative programs that address one or more of the following priority areas: Mental Health, Homelessness and Housing, Human Services for Children and Youth, and Workforce Development.

2. Who is administering this program?

The Community Foundation of Westmoreland County (CFC) has issued the Request for Proposals in partnership with and on behalf of the Westmoreland County Commissioners and the Westmoreland County Department of Human Services. Westmoreland County administers the ARPA allocation and will make all funding decisions related to this RFP. Westmoreland County will contract with and monitor all selected applicants.

3. What is the source of the grants?

The source of grants is Westmoreland County's allocation of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

4. What is the total amount available under this program?

Westmoreland County Department of Human Services will distribute up to \$3 million.

5. Is there a cap on the amount of funding individual organizations can receive under this program?

While there is a minimum of \$150,000 for requests, there is no cap. Please note that this amount reflects a 17-month project period beginning August 1, 2023, and ending December 31, 2024.

6. Will all applicants be awarded grant funds?

No. The County is under no obligation to award or enter into an agreement with any applicant as the result of this RFP. The County reserves the right to reject any and all proposals at any time during the process.

7. What are the eligibility requirements?

To be eligible for consideration, applicants must meet the following minimum criteria:

- Be a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization,
- Have a minimum annual operating budget of \$300,000 and have completed a recent financial audit, and
- Demonstrate the organizational capacity and expertise necessary to manage federal funds.

Please note that prior experience managing federal funds is not required but is preferred.

8. Are faith-based organizations eligible?

Faith-based organizations may apply for funding if they are designated as a 501(c)3 organization.

9. How can the funds be used?

Funds may be used for programmatic and administrative expenses associated with the proposed human services project. Administrative expenses may not exceed 6% of the total budget request.

Funds may NOT be used to service long-term debt or to make retirement contributions.

10. When will the grant application process open?

Applicants may apply beginning on April 3, 2023.

11. When is the deadline to submit?

The application is due by 11:00 p.m. May 12, 2023. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

12. How do I apply?

All applications must be submitted using the CFWC online application portal (<https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=pittsburgh>) through its parent organization, The Pittsburgh Foundation. If you do not have an existing account with the portal, you will first need to create a profile. You can save your work and return as needed. There is no application fee.

For technical assistance regarding the use of the online application, please contact Emily Rousseau at rousseau@pghfdn.org.

13. When will funding decisions be made?

The County, working in conjunction with CFWC, will work as quickly as possible to review applications and make determinations. An estimated date for decisions is July 13, 2023. This date is subject to change.

14. Who should I contact with questions concerning my application, eligibility or required documents?

Questions about the RFP must be submitted by 5:00 PM on April 21 to receive a response. Questions should be emailed to martinom@cfwestmoreland.org with subject line "ARPA RFP Questions." Responses will be posted on the CFWC website at <https://cfwestmoreland.org/humanservicesARPA>.

For technical assistance regarding the use of the online application, please contact Emily Rousseau at rousseau@pghfdn.org.

15. Can an agency submit more than one proposal?

No. Agencies may only submit one proposal. However, please note that there is no cap on the requested amount.

16. If any agency has an existing grant with CFWC or Westmoreland County, does this preclude them from receiving funding under this RFP?

No, it does not.

17. The RFP states that applicants may be required to submit proof of current licensure, if applicable. What does this mean?

Westmoreland County may require this documentation for behavioral health or developmental services programs that are licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, as an example.

18. Can you clarify whether alternative education programs that are not considered public schools are eligible to apply?

An alternative education program is eligible to apply.

19. Can subsidiary corporations of the same parent corporation submit separate applications for different projects or focus areas?

Yes.

20. If government entities are ineligible, how about entities such as public libraries that receive state, county, and local funding?

Libraries that are registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply.

21. What are the funders' views about collaborative applications with multiple entities?

The County supports collaborative applications. Collaborative applications should clearly identify the role of each partner, identify a fiscal lead and demonstrate why the partnership will be successful.

22. Will you accept a 990 instead of an audit?

No. We require BOTH a 990 and audit.

23. Can an agency apply if it serves residents of Westmoreland County as well as other counties?

Yes. However, any funds awarded must be used solely to serve residents of Westmoreland County.

24. Are program staff wages permissible?

Yes.

25. We have a couple of ideas for this grant. Is there someone who could talk with us about what would be of greatest benefit to the community?

We have identified four areas of greatest benefit to Westmoreland County: mental health, homelessness and housing, human services for children, and workforce development. We will not hold any individual meetings with prospective applicants.

26. Can these funds be used to pay for construction of a building to serve more individuals with mental health needs residentially?

Construction is an allowable cost. However, if asking for construction (new or renovation), you must include an operating budget for the facility and demonstrate how you will sustain the building over time. Additionally, you must clearly demonstrate the need for building ownership.

27. We do not have an audit. Are we eligible to apply still?

No. Applicants must have a minimum operating budget of \$300,000 AND audited financial statements.

28. Our audit will not be completed before the proposal deadline. Can we submit a proposal with a target audit completion date that is after the deadline, or would it make more sense to partner with another organization?

It would make more sense to partner with another organization that can provide an audit. A completed audit is a requirement of all applicants.

29. How can organizations that do not meet the requirements (e.g., organization size and audit) participate?

Agencies that do not meet the requirements cannot apply. However, we encourage you to identify a partner that can be the applicant if they are truly a partner and not just acting as a fiscal agent. In addition, organizations can reach out to Rob Hamilton at RHamilto@co.westmoreland.pa.us to schedule time to talk to him about other DHS opportunities and introduce your organization.

30. We provide services in and work with schools. Can we still apply?

Yes, provided your organization meets the minimum eligibility criteria.

31. Where can I find the slides from the info session?

All slides and recordings can be found at <https://cfwestmoreland.org/humanservicesARPA>

32. Which entity will be disbursing the funds?

All contracts will be held by Westmoreland County and the County will issue the payments to approved applicants.

33. My project is focused on improving mental health. What type of outcome data would you want to see? Can I use self-compassion scales?

Each organization should identify outcomes that align with its programming. Movement on self-compassion scales can be an outcome.

34. My agency does not have experience managing federal funds. If successful, what would we need to do to be ready to manage the funds? Are there any resources that can help us better understand what needs to be put in place?

Your financial system must be able to track ARPA grant funds separately from other funding your agency receives, and you must be able to report on all grant expenditures. Additionally, you will be monitored. We suggest reviewing the County contract template at <https://cfwestmoreland.org/humanservicesARPA>.

35. Where can I find more data about human services needs in Westmoreland County?

The following online resources may be helpful:

- Improving Human Services in Westmoreland County (The Hill Group, April 2021): Available online at <https://cfwestmoreland.org/reports>

- Westmoreland Community Action’s Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2022: Available online at <https://westmorelandca.org/westmoreland-community-action-comprehensive-needs-assessment-2022/>
- Excelsa Health Needs Assessment: Available online at <https://www.excelahealth.org/community-wellness/community-outreach/community-health-needs-assessment/>

36. My organization provides matching retirement contributions to staff as part of their benefits package. Is this an allowable cost with the ARPA funds?

No. Matching retirement contributions are not an allowable cost.

37. Can equipment be purchased using this funding?

Yes, equipment is an allowable expense.