



**Visionaries  
Request for Proposals  
August 26, 2019**

**THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF WESTMORELAND COUNTY**

The Community Foundation of Westmoreland County was founded in 1995 by local leaders of Westmoreland County to encourage philanthropy, build a sense of place and embrace the spirit of community. Merging with The Pittsburgh Foundation in 2010, The Community Foundation of Westmoreland County continues to work with county residents to encourage that spirit of giving and investment in community organizations and residents. Our mission is to encourage local residents to become PHILANTHROPISTS, to provide GRANTS that support a wide variety of non-profit organizations and serve as a COMMUNITY LEADER.



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VISIONARIES

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*Visionaries* is an initiative of The Community Foundation of Westmoreland County... a fresh approach to philanthropy. It consists of young professional leaders in their 20s, 30s, and 40s throughout Westmoreland County who are committed to making our community a better place. Our mission is to nurture philanthropic leadership among young people through engagement, education, grant making and the development of a permanent endowment to support initiatives throughout the county that our generation considers indispensable.

**STATEMENT OF NEED**

Earlier this year, Westmoreland County adopted the county comprehensive plan, Reimagining Our Westmoreland. In this document, the county outlines the need for a well trained and supported workforce to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Core Object 1 outlines a series of six strategies to grow the workforce in Westmoreland County. After close examination of the research, the Visionaries have honed in one Core Objective 1, Strategies 3 and 4 as a critical component that needs to be supported.

Strategy 1.3: Assist Small Businesses

*Equip small businesses with the resources necessary to not only establish themselves in Westmoreland but also to expand and flourish.*

## Strategy 1.4: Advance Entrepreneurialism

*Identify and promote resources for individuals and entities looking to establish a startup in Westmoreland County to help simplify and ease the process.*

### **Visionaries Workforce Development Grants – Overview**

The Visionaries are seeking proposals from nonprofit organizations, municipalities, and educational institutions for grants ranging from \$2,000 - \$25,000 to fund new and existing programs that support entrepreneurs and small businesses in Westmoreland County. The Visionaries are interested in strengthening the support system throughout the county for entrepreneurs and small business owners by connecting them to resources needed to be successful. The funds must be used by nonprofit organizations, municipalities, or educational institutions to implement programs designed to help entrepreneurs and small business owners and cannot be obtained by the businesses or business owners themselves.

### **ELIGIBLE PROJECTS & APPLICANTS**

Applicants must be a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, municipality, or educational institution serving communities in Westmoreland County.

Examples of eligible projects and supports for entrepreneurs and small businesses include but are not limited to:

- Technical assistance
- Business resources
- Succession planning
- Technology upgrades and support
- Information distribution
- Business planning & development
- Programming through coworking and incubator spaces
- Mentor and job shadowing initiatives

Visionary grants will not provide grants to

- Capital campaigns
- Endowment funds
- For-profit entities
- Fundraising events
- Individual business owners
- Political groups
- Religious organizations for religious purposes
- Businesses (direct financial support)

### **REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

All applications meeting the basic requirements will be reviewed by a selection committee comprised of Visionaries members. Finalists will be notified on or around October 18, 2019 and asked to present their ideas/projects at a Visionaries “Pitch Party” event on Thursday, November 14, 2019 at 6:00pm at The Community Foundation of Westmoreland County (951 Old Salem

Road, Greensburg). Finalists must be able to attend the November 14 event in order to be eligible for funding consideration. At this event, the following will be awarded:

- 1) Based on the grant application process, an announcement will be made awarding one or more organizations with up to \$25,000 in grants.
- 2) The finalists will be invited to “pitch” their projects/initiatives and attendees can choose to donate money to cast a vote for their favorite project. Each finalist will receive all proceeds from the voting, in addition to a People’s Choice Award of \$1,500 for first place, \$1,000 for second place and \$500 for third place.

Applications will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- The project or activity takes places within Westmoreland County.
- Project will provide supports and resources to entrepreneurs or small business owners.
- The quality and potential impact of the proposed project.
- Maximizes partnerships whenever applicable.
- Organization has provided clear examples of and capacity for tracking measures of success.
- Organization has a track record of success working with entrepreneurs and small businesses, and the capacity to complete the project as described.
- It is encouraged that the organization think about involving young professionals in the implementation of the work of this project/initiative.
- Budget and timeline are realistic.
- Ability to evaluate the impact and success of the program or project.

Additionally, applicants will be asked to submit the following information:

- Current Board Member roster, if applicable
- Proposed project budget
- Copy of 2019 Operating budget
- Additional supporting documentation

## **IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES**

<b>August 26, 2019</b>	RFP Released/Application Opens
<b>September 20, 2019</b>	Application Closes
<b>October 18, 2019</b>	Finalists Announced
<b>November 14, 2019</b>	Pitch Party/Awardees Announced

Additional information, including access to the RFP and online application portal can be found at [www.cfwestmoreland.org](http://www.cfwestmoreland.org). All applications must be submitted using the online application portal through our parent organization, The Pittsburgh Foundation. For technical assistance, please contact Jennifer Steinmetz at [steinmetzj@pghfdn.org](mailto:steinmetzj@pghfdn.org).

### **Questions**

*Visionaries* is a program of The Community Foundation of Westmoreland County. Please direct questions about the RFP to Mallory Reese, Development and Donor Services Officer, at [mreese@cfwestmoreland.org](mailto:mreese@cfwestmoreland.org).