

WilliamPennFoundation

Request for Proposals

Connecting Families with Public Benefits and Tax Credits

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Introduction

The William Penn Foundation (WPF) has a long history of investing in efforts to improve the lives of young children in Philadelphia. The Foundation’s Children and Families program was created to expand access to programs and resources that support the healthy development and academic success of young children, ages 0 to 8, in Philadelphia. A full description of the Children and Families program, its goal, and its objectives can be found on the Foundation’s website. This specific Request for Proposals (RFP) was created to help organizations to advance the following objective:

By 2035, WPF-funded efforts will connect 25,000 families with young children with public benefits (e.g. SNAP, WIC, Medicaid enrollment, TANF, and utility assistance) and tax credits worth at least \$75 million.

There are many publicly funded programs that are designed to help children and their families to meet basic needs such as medical care, nutrition, utilities, or income. Unfortunately, securing and maintaining access to those programs can be challenging. For this reason, WPF supports efforts to improve the systems that connect families to public benefits and ease the burden on families seeking to enroll in public benefits. While WPF support for this work began in the summer of 2024, access to public benefits was made more difficult as of July 2025, with the passage of H.R. 1. This federal budget reconciliation law introduced the largest budget cuts in history to SNAP and Medicaid and created additional barriers for low-income households to access the publicly funded programs that were designed to help children and families meet their basic needs.

The Foundation recognizes that there are many ways that organizations and communities can help families access the benefits for which they qualify. With that understanding, this Request for Proposals focuses on efforts that will improve the myriad of systems that families need to access to secure the benefits for which they are entitled. For example, proposals may focus on supporting local and/or state systems improvement, simplifying or streamlining processes, informing policy change, or other efforts that make it easier for families with young children to secure their benefits.

Regardless of the approach, all applicants should describe a compelling explanation for how their proposed work will make tangible improvements in families' access to public benefits in Philadelphia.

The specific criteria that will be used to assess all proposals can be found on pages 7 and 8 of this document.

This RFP seeks projects that will make tangible improvements to systems that connect families with public benefits for which they qualify.

Why is the Foundation using a Request for Proposals to advance this objective?

The Foundation has chosen to advance this objective using a Request for Proposals for several reasons. First, we believe that stakeholders across the region have a great deal of expertise and experience that can be supported to make progress on an objective that we heard was important to communities in our region. We want to hear about the impactful projects that are underway or could get underway and need funding. Second, we want to be as transparent as possible about the opportunity for non-profit organizations in the region to secure funding for work to advance this objective.

Background

Due to rising costs of living and other barriers to economic mobility, many Philadelphia families face financial challenges. A study conducted by the Urban Institute in 2024, entitled "Accessing Public Benefits in Philadelphia," suggests that families need simple, convenient ways to apply for benefits and individualized support to eliminate barriers to access benefits.¹ New barriers to access resulting from federal policy change create challenges for the intended users of these public benefits and for the public enrollment systems created to facilitate access. For example, new federal work requirements and semi-annual renewals could result in over 300,000 Pennsylvanians losing Medicaid.²

Public support for families' basic needs improves children's health and educational success over the long-term. Removing systemic barriers to accessing these programs benefits families and their children and strengthens the community, fostering equity, economic empowerment, and resilience.

By 2034, Philadelphia is projected to lose \$11.4 billion in SNAP and Medicaid funding.³



¹ Coffey, A., Sonoda, P., & Wagner, L. (2024). *Accessing Public Benefits in Philadelphia*. Urban Institute.

² Pennsylvania Governor's Office. "Impact of U.S. House GOP Medicaid and SNAP Budget Reconciliation Proposals on Pennsylvania." Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, May 21, 2025.

³ PA Partnerships for Children. (2026). *Projected Total SNAP and Medicaid Funding Loss by 2034 by County*.

Opportunity Overview

The Foundation seeks to support efforts that increase access to public benefits for families with young children, ages 0-8, in Philadelphia. Funding through this RFP will be limited to projects that benefit multiple organizations or create system-level improvements to access. Projects focused on individual organizations providing direct services to enroll families in public benefits programs will **not** be eligible for funding through this RFP.

Funding will be focused on efforts that improve or strengthen the systems that help families access and maintain public benefits and/or tax credits. For example, proposals may focus on supporting local and/or state systems improvement, simplifying or streamlining processes, informing policy change, or other efforts that make it easier for families with young children to secure their benefits.

We are requesting proposals for **up to three years of funding**. After reviewing proposals, WPF will conduct site visits and gather additional information from a limited number of organizations.

Organizations that propose projects in partnership with other applicants will be considered on their individual merits. However, the Foundation recognizes that making significant progress on the objective is difficult and encourages organizations to include partnerships that leverage complementary strengths, resources, and expertise to reach proposed goals.

The Foundation recognizes that there are many different tactics or approaches that could be used to advance the objective stated above. All proposals that meet the review criteria described below are encouraged.

WPF has \$3 million available to advance this objective through this RFP. There is no minimum or maximum amount of funding that organizations may request. However, **grant requests under \$1 million will be most competitive**. The grant amount requested should be commensurate with the contribution that the project will make to the overall objective.

Eligibility

Applicants must be recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as 501(c)3 public charities or operate under a public charity fiduciary. Public charities include community-based organizations, schools and educational institutions, and other types of public-serving groups. Government entities are also eligible to apply.

Proposed projects must serve families with young children, ages 0-8, who are residents of Philadelphia and document how their intervention will serve these families.

Projects that are working to expand eligibility rules for public benefits, are providing direct enrollment support to families, or are focused on improving the enrollment system at a single organization are **not** eligible for this RFP.

Existing grantees currently receiving funding to advance this objective cannot request additional funds for their current projects.

Before you apply, please review the questions below. If you can confidently answer “yes” to the questions, this funding opportunity may be relevant to you. If you respond “no” to any of the questions, this opportunity is not a good match for your project, and you should not apply.

Key Questions		YES	NO
Will this project create meaningful improvement in the systems, pathways, and processes that families use to access public benefits?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have a track record of success in impacting systems change at the local, state, or federal level?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Will this project positively impact more than one organization working to ensure families are connected to public benefits and tax credits?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Will the project lead to more Philadelphia families successfully accessing public benefits for which they are currently eligible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Please also review all of the criteria on the following pages and make sure that your program aligns with those.

Review Criteria

Proposals will be judged on the criteria below. **Applicants should address these criteria in their narrative responses to the application questions.**

Alignment with Objective			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
Project conveys no meaningful connection to the objective.	Project would make a marginal and/or uncertain contribution to advancing the objective.	Project would make a clear contribution to advancing the objective.	Project would make a clear and significant contribution to advancing the objective.
Program Design and Feasibility			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
Proposal does not provide a clear approach to the work. Anticipated outcomes and success are not well-defined.	Proposal describes an approach to the work, but some aspects are vague, difficult to understand or seem unrealistic. Anticipated outcomes are defined, but are of uncertain achievability, based on the details provided.	Proposal provides a clear approach but could be more specific. Anticipated outcomes require further clarification to assess feasibility.	Proposal provides a clear and feasible plan to implement the work and includes a solid justification for anticipated outcomes.
Partnerships and Collaboration			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
No potential partners or plans for collaboration.	Potential partners relevant to the project are identified but there are no clear commitments.	Some committed partnerships relevant to the project, a plan to build any necessary new partnerships, and a description of each partner's role.	Sufficient committed partnerships relevant to the project, a description of each partner's role, and a track record of successful collaboration.
Organizational Experience			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
No implementation experience and no track record of success.	Less than three years of experience with advancing the specified objective and a limited track record of success.	Three to five years of experience advancing the specified objective and success in Philadelphia or other relevant cities or regions.	More than five years of experience advancing the specified objective and an extensive track record of success in Philadelphia and/or Pennsylvania.
Community Knowledge and Engagement			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
No evidence of familiarity with the intended beneficiaries of the proposed project and no plan for future engagement.	Minimal evidence of familiarity with intended beneficiaries of the proposed project, but there is a commitment to develop a stakeholder engagement plan during implementation.	Evidence of familiarity with the intended beneficiaries of the proposed project and there is a plan for ongoing stakeholder engagement during implementation.	Key components of the project were informed by the intended beneficiaries of the proposed project and there is a plan for ongoing engagement during implementation.

Additional expectations:

Informed by participants	Projects should demonstrate how they have been informed by individuals and families who have experienced challenges accessing public benefits.
Outcomes	Proposals should include specific, measurable goals and the tools to track impact.
Coordination	Proposed projects must demonstrate coordination and/or avoid duplication of other systems change efforts.
Prior Experience	Proposals should describe the organization’s prior experience in systems change work.
Budget	The requested budget is reasonable for the proposed activities and the stated results.

Learning and Insights

Grantees will be expected to complete a brief written report each year describing how they have made progress toward the objective above and what they have learned during the year.

In addition, organizations funded through this RFP will be convened in a Learning Community to build networks among those advancing a common objective, to share learning and best practices, and to identify ways in which progress could be enhanced. Grantees will help to determine the frequency, content, and specific goals of the Learning Community. The overhead funding included with any awarded grants is, in part, meant to help subsidize staff participation in the Learning Community.



Webinar

Interested organizations are invited to participate in an optional informational webinar on **Wednesday, June 24, 2026 at 11:00AM ET.**

Register for the webinar at <https://lu.ma/williampenfoundation>

Budget

Project budgets should cover up to three years of funding and may include up to three months for planning. Organizations are encouraged to build on their existing efforts, using WPF funding to supplement or enhance that work.

Project budgets should be all-inclusive, including any fees to partner organizations or consultants. This information can be provided in the proposal narrative.

Except in rare circumstances, total funding from WPF should not exceed 25% of a participating organization's operating budget.

All aspects of project development and execution, including planning, design, materials, community engagement, staffing, and implementation, are eligible for funding.

In rare cases, it is possible that *everything* an organization does is focused on advancing the specific objective stated above. If that is the case, an organization may be eligible for general operating, rather than project support. If you believe that to be the case, please email the Program Officer found at the end of this document to discuss further.

Proposals that Include Advocacy and Lobbying

The Foundation recognizes that advocacy can sometimes be a useful tactic to advance certain objectives. Advocacy takes many forms and sometimes includes activities that the Internal Revenue Service defines as lobbying. (See [Application Guidelines for Advocacy Projects](#) for general information on the IRS lobbying rules.) The Foundation is open to proposals that include advocacy and/or lobbying as part of the project and may fund projects that include lobbying so long as certain requirements are met.

Applications that include advocacy or lobbying must:

1. Show in the budget submitted by the applicant that the amount requested from the Foundation is less than 80% of the total project budget.
2. Identify the proportion of the total project budget, if any, that may support activities defined as lobbying under the IRS rules (the “lobbying percentage”). (You will see a specific question about this on the budget template.)
3. Show that the applicant has funding commitments that will cover a minimum of 20% of the total project budget for at least the first year of the proposed grant period. In-kind contributions cannot be counted toward this portion of the budget. (Organizations will be expected to demonstrate funding commitments for at least 20% of the budget for all years of the grant period, but we recognize that it may take additional time to secure those commitments.)
4. If the lobbying percentage is more than 20% of the project budget, the applicant must show that they have committed funds that exceed that lobbying percentage.

In no cases can WPF earmark funds for lobbying activities, nor can Foundation funds be used to support or oppose any candidate for public office, for voter registration efforts, or for any partisan purposes

Application Process

If you answered “yes” to all of the questions in the eligibility section above and meet the stated criteria, the application process begins by completing a proposal on our online system at <https://wfp.my.site.com/grantee>.

Submit your application by 5:00PM ET on **July 30, 2026**. A WPF team will review all proposals and will notify applicants if they have been selected to move forward in the review process. **To download a working copy of the application to draft responses, please [click here](#).**

Selected organizations will take part in a site visit with WPF staff so that the Foundation can learn more about applicants’ work. Site visits will be approximately two hours in duration. We ask that organizations use this time to introduce key staff working on the proposed project, to show WPF staff where the work will take place, and to elevate the voices of the potential beneficiaries of the proposed project. Based on a combination of the written materials and the learning from the site visit, **a final slate of organizations** will be recommended to the WPF Board for consideration of their proposals.

This request or any subsequent response does not commit William Penn Foundation or the responding organization to any future funding or engagement. If you have any questions, contact Aly Tooher at atoohier@williampennfoundation.org.

Timeline

June 17, 2026

Proposal submission period opens.

June 24, 2026

Informational Webinar (see page 8)

July 30, 2026

Proposals due by 5:00PM ET

August 12-17, 2026

Select applicants notified that their proposals have been chosen for further consideration and a site visit. Other applicants will be notified that their proposals are not advancing in the process.

August 17-September 14, 2026

Site visits conducted by WPF staff with selected applicants.

October 23, 2026

WPF Board review selected proposals.

November 2026

Project implementation can begin.