

Dauphin County Community Matters Grants Criteria 2023 Grant Process

The Dauphin County Community Matters Grant Program was created in 2023 to support underserved minority communities, minority-owned and women-owned businesses in Dauphin County. As highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the social and economic well-being of our communities and businesses of color have a substantial impact on the success of the entire county.

For this reason, the Dauphin County Commissioners believe that creating a specific program to support minority businesses and communities of color – who continue to face unique socioeconomic and small business barriers – is paramount to building an equitable and successful post-pandemic economy.

Utilizing local funds generated through American Rescue Plan lost revenue reimbursement dollars, Dauphin County will provide grants of up to \$50,000 to eligible minority and women-owned businesses, nonprofit entities and community projects that support the growth and stability of minority-owned business or have a benefit to underserved communities. ***(Applicants may request funds in an amount exceeding the \$50,000 maximum. However, the application narrative must demonstrate that the request amount is justified by its impact on minority/underserved populations. These projects are considered “Impact Projects” that must have a tangible benefit to the community.)***

The Dauphin County Community Matters Advisory Board has established the criteria by which all applications seeking a share of grant funds will be recommended to the Dauphin County Board of Commissioners. The goal is to ensure consistency during the review process and recommendation of the most impactful grant awards. Please note that the points under each criterion are the maximum number of points that can be awarded.

This summary is intended to serve as a starting point for evaluating projects. Each criterion is briefly described in the attached matrix and assigned a point total. It is not expected that a project will earn points for every criterion.

Please note that priority will be given to projects that can demonstrate a tangible impact on an underserved community within Dauphin County or verifiable growth of a minority-owned small business through job creation/retention, increased operational capacity, or verifiable impact the request will have on the business’s success.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The following entities are eligible to apply. Please note that this program is intended to support minority-owned businesses and underserved communities. Applicants should have a specific project/use in mind that serves at least one of the above-mentioned priorities.

Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Small Business: For-profit business that is legally incorporated with at least 51% minority and/ women ownership and 100 or fewer employees as of January 1, 2022. Eligible applicants must have a physical location in Dauphin County and **must have been established no later than January 1, 2022.**

Non-Profit Entities: 501c3 entities legally incorporated with a physical operating location within Dauphin County and serves underserved and low-income communities. Eligible applicants must have a physical location in Dauphin County and **must have been established no later than January 1, 2022.**

Municipalities and Redevelopment Authorities: Any of Dauphin County's 40 municipalities or a Redevelopment Authority recognized by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and located in Dauphin County. Projects submitted by municipalities and redevelopment authorities must have a clear and tangible impact on an underserved community within their jurisdiction.

APPLICATION LIMIT

Project applications may request Community Matters funding in any amount up to **\$50,000.**

Applicants may request funds in an amount exceeding the \$50,000 maximum. However, the application narrative must demonstrate that the request amount is justified by its impact on minority/underserved populations.

FORM OF APPLICATION

Applicants must draft and submit a hard copy application packet that contains the following:

- Application Cover Page and Additional Entity Information Page
- Narrative Responses
- Attached Budget
- Supporting Documentation as requested in the program application guidelines.

Three (3) hard copy application packets and one (1) flash drive must be submitted.

SCORING CRITERIA

Applications will be reviewed based upon the following criteria:

CATEGORIES

Proposed projects must fall within at least one of the qualifying categories identified below. Projects may qualify or earn points under multiple categories.

- Increasing Minority/Women- Owned Business Enterprise Opportunity, including projects for reducing overall project cost to the applicant for bidding on public projects concerning community infrastructure and/or technology infrastructure. *This may include, but is not limited to, financial support to assist a minority/women owned business with obtaining bonding required to bid on projects, equipment to expand project capabilities, hiring of labor to support project capacity or obtaining training on bidding on government contracts.*

- Promoting Minority/Women Owned Business Enterprise Development. Projects in this category include, but are not limited to, those existing entities and proposed entities that would leverage Community Matters grant awards in the start-up or expansion of a MBE/WBE within Dauphin County. *This may include, but is not limited to, working capital support for hiring new employees, assisting in acquisition of property, purchase of equipment necessary to grow business, marketing, and professional services to support financial literacy and business planning.* Projects under this category would demonstrate the challenges of identifying start-up/expansion capital.

- Supporting Underserved Communities (Nonprofit and Municipal Applicants Only). Projects in this category are those that provide a tangible improvement to an underserved community. *Nonprofit and municipal entities will apply under this category for activities that may include, but are not limited to: expanded public/social services benefiting an underserved community, creation or improvement of public amenities (parks, pocket parks, lighting, blight removal, etc.), infrastructure, or community institutions located within an underserved community (food pantries, libraries, nonprofit providers, after school programs, etc.)*

PROHIBITION ON CERTAIN ACTIVITIES

Use of Community Matters Grant funds are strictly prohibited for the following activities:

- Contributions to any political action committee or candidate.
- Political and/or lobbying activities of any kind.
- Administrative fees or indirect costs including general lump sum payments to applicant.
- Religious activities and/or activities that deny benefits to any person on the basis of religion.
- Activities that present a real or apparent conflict of interest.

- Expenses related to general government operations.

APPLICANT NEED AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

10 POINTS

- The application provides a narrative on the existing conditions for the applicant and how the proposed project will provide a positive impact and improve the opportunity/development/start-up of a MBE/WBE, or how the project will enhance access and opportunity for MBE/WBE within the identified project area.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

10 POINTS

- The application provides a detailed budget, including all sources and uses of funds, for the project from start to finish, including multiple project phases if applicable, and highlights how the Community Matters funds will help provide a critical financial role. Application also provides cost estimates for the project, preferably from the local municipal engineer or appropriately credentialed subject matter expert, if applicable. *Priority will be given to applicants that demonstrate adequate local funding/commitments on hand to complete project if awarded Community Matters funds. Projects with a significant amount of speculative funding sources will be scored accordingly.*
- *Applicants that request funding in excess of \$50,000 must demonstrate an impact on the minority/underserved community that justifies the request amount.*

LEVERAGING OF COMMUNITY MATTERS FUNDS

15 POINTS

- The application provides a detailed list of funds, other than Community Matters Grant funds, that are being applied for that will be or have been associated with this project. Projects with a substantial amount of funds from other sources will be given strong consideration.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

10 POINTS

- The grant agreement will require that work must be initiated on all winning projects within ONE YEAR of the grant award. The application provides a detailed timeline of the project and demonstrates the ability to comply with the timeline requirement.

APPLICANTS OPERATING SOLVENCY

10 POINTS

- Applicants should provide proof of financial solvency in the form of their most recent audit, balance sheet, profit/loss statement, or other financial report verifying applicant has long-term solvency to remain in business after receiving a Community Matters Grant award.

PROOF OF ENTITY OWNERSHIP

10 POINTS

- Small business and Nonprofit Applicants must provide proof of business/nonprofit entity, ownership, physical location and number of employees.

JOBS CREATED/RETAINED

10 POINTS

- Applicants should provide number of current full-time and part-time jobs, projected number of temporary full-time and part-time jobs created by project, if any, and projected number of permanent full-time and part-time jobs to be employed by applicant after project.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

10 POINTS

- The application includes letters of support from federal, state and/or local officials, as well as from community organizations, agencies, businesses and citizens. Editorials or news articles may also be considered.

EXPERT ANALYSIS

5 POINTS

- If applicable, the application provides professional or expert studies, analyses or support documents related to the project or its need, uses, or costs. (Examples include preliminary studies done by engineers, architects or any other professionals supporting the need, uses and costs of the project).

LOCATION

10 POINTS

The applicant must provide evidence of principal place of business (if a business/non-profit/other entity).

- Dauphin County: 10 Points
- Outside Dauphin County: 0 Points

TIMELINE

1/15/23 Grant Program Announced/Publicized

1/15/23 – 2/15/23: Grant Round Open/Application Deadline

March/April 2023: Review and Recommendations to Commissioners

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SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

PLEASE MAIL/HAND-DELIVER THREE (3) HARD COPY APPLICATION PACKETS AND ONE (1) FLASH DRIVE **NO LATER THAN 4:30PM ON February 15, 2023** TO:

**ATTN: George Connor
3211 North Front Street, Suite 301-C
Harrisburg, PA 17113**

*Three (3) hard copy applications and one (1) flash drive must be postmarked, or hand delivered by **February 15, 2023**.*

Award decisions are expected to be made by March/April 2023.