

WCF Competitive Grants Rubric

General Instructions

Read the entire application before assigning scores. Evaluate each request using the criteria below and the evidence in the application. Consider the applicant's proposed plan, past results, and ability to carry out the work. The "Indicators of Strength" provide examples, not a checklist. For each criterion, assess the quality, relevance, and completeness of the information. Use your scores and comments to explain your funding recommendation.

Expect the amount and detail of evidence, planning, and financial information to be proportionate to the size and complexity of the request and the organization. Base each score on the quality of the plan, the evidence provided, and how well both fit the request. A request does not merit a higher score solely because it serves more people, includes more partners, or provides direct services. The four focus areas are Housing & Economic Mobility, Lifelong Learning, Health & Wellness, and Community & Cultural Vibrancy.

Apply the Criteria to the Request Type

- *Program or project requests:* Review the proposed work, expected results, work plan, and program or project budget.
- *Capacity-building requests:* Review the improvement the applicant wants to make and how it will strengthen work tied to the selected WCF outcome. Base the score on the quality of the plan and whether the plan can reasonably close the capacity gap.
- *General operating requests:* Review the organization's work, priorities, results, ability to do the work, and finances. Use its overall financial records. A separate program or project budget is not included in the application.

Scoring Guidance

Score each criterion from 1 to 5. A score of 3 means the application meets the criterion. The highest possible total is 40 points. Use the total score, your comments, and your judgment to make the funding recommendation.

Score	Rating	Guidance
1	Poor	The application does not address the criterion, or it gives information that raises serious concern about the request.
2	Fair	The application addresses only part of the criterion or gives too little detail. Important questions remain.
3	Average	The application meets the criterion, and the request appears sound. However, the evidence or detail is limited.
4	Good	The application meets the criterion with clear, useful evidence and shows a strong chance of success.
5	Outstanding	The application meets the criterion with clear and detailed evidence. The evidence shows exceptional strength.

1. Fit with WCF Focus Area and Outcome

The application clearly shows how the request supports a WCF focus area and the selected outcome.

Indicators of strength: The application names an outcome and explains how the request supports it. General operating work and priorities support the outcome. A capacity-building improvement strengthens related work. Score whether the request can make a realistic difference for a grant and organization of the application's size.

2. Need, Opportunity, or Community Condition

The application gives a strong reason for support and explains why the work matters now.

Indicators of strength: A strong application describes the need, opportunity, or community condition, who or what is affected, and why action is needed now. It uses relevant local data, community experience, past results, or other useful evidence. Treat problem-solving, opportunity, and community-strengthening requests equally.

3. Benefit to the Community and Local Area

The application clearly explains who or what will benefit and how the request will help the greater Williamsburg area.

Indicators of strength: A strong application describes a clear local benefit for people, organizations, places, or natural, historic, or cultural resources. Regional or statewide applicants explain the specific benefit to Williamsburg, James City County, or York County. The expected benefit and estimated reach fit the request's size.

4. Results and Work Plan

The application states a clear, useful, and realistic result. It gives a practical plan for achieving that result.

Indicators of strength: A strong application states the expected change, benefit, or improvement, and explains how planned activities, methods, roles, or priorities will produce it. The result, plan, and schedule are specific, realistic, and supported by sound information or experience.

5. Ability to Do the Work and Lead It

The applicant shows that it can carry out the request and use WCF funds responsibly.

Indicators of strength: A strong application identifies who will lead and carry out the work. It describes relevant experience, clear roles, or past results supporting the plan. The work fits available staff, volunteers, time, and resources. Capacity-building requests identify who will lead the improvement and any outside help needed.

6. Collaboration and Working Relationships

The application identifies the collaboration, approvals, or permissions needed for success. If collaboration is not needed, it explains how the applicant can complete the work on its own.

Indicators of strength: The application identifies collaborators, approvals, or permissions needed. It describes each partner's role and commitment and how they will collaborate. If the applicant can complete the work alone, it explains why. Score collaboration based on its value, clear roles, commitment, and coordination—not the number of partners.

7. Measuring Progress and Past Results

The application gives a realistic way to measure progress and shows useful past results or lessons.

Indicators of strength: The application explains what the applicant will track and how it will show progress. The measures fit the work and request size. For a larger community effort, they show the applicant's contribution. Past WCF grantees provide relevant results and lessons; first-time applicants draw from other work.

8. Financial Health and a Reasonable Request

The application shows that the organization can manage its money and meet its costs. The financial information is clear and consistent. The funding plan appears workable.

Indicators of strength: A strong application provides realistic, consistent finances; identifies confirmed, pending, and donated support; and requests an amount fitting the organization, work, and benefit. It includes the required budget and cost explanation, or, for general operating support, clear organization-wide finances. It explains continuation after the grant.

Score Summary and Recommendation

Copy each criterion score into the summary and add the scores. The highest possible total is 40 points.

Funding Recommendation

Choose one recommendation. Recommend either full funding or no funding.

- ☐ **Fund the request**
- ☐ **Do not fund the request**

Comments

All reviewers can see your comments. Explain the main reasons for your recommendation. Include the application's most important strengths and concerns. Add any questions the committee should discuss.