

Community Funds Volunteer Handbook

January 2026



**GREATER
HARTFORD
GIVES**
FOUNDATION

Community
Funds

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Welcome to the Greater Hartford Gives Foundation!

CEO Welcome

Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to the Greater Hartford Gives Foundation, formerly known as Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Thank you for your interest in volunteering for the Community Funds Program.

This handbook was designed to give you background on the Foundation and provide a broad overview of ways you can support your community by volunteering with your town's community fund. We hope that you find this handbook helpful in answering questions while also giving you guidance through your volunteer experience.

We thank you for sharing your passion, expertise, and time to give voice to community solutions that can improve the quality of life for those in our region and across the state of Connecticut. We will strive to ensure your volunteer time is fulfilling and meaningful.

Sincerely,



Jay Williams
President and CEO



Section 1: Who We Are: The Greater Hartford Gives Foundation

Mission Statement

Putting philanthropy into action to create lasting solutions that result in vibrant communities within the Greater Hartford region.

Who We Are

Greater Hartford Gives Foundation is a community foundation, a hub for community-driven change. We fuel impact throughout Greater Hartford and beyond by making connections, providing funding, and sharing knowledge. Our goal is to create an inclusive region where everyone prospers. Together, with a powerful network of changemakers, we identify our neighbors' most pressing needs and invest resources in initiatives that dismantle racial and economic barriers and improve quality of life. In our 100-year history, we have invested more than \$1 billion throughout the region. Join us in building a Greater Hartford full of opportunity. Learn more at greaterhartfordgives.org.

Who We Serve

We serve all 29 towns in the Greater Hartford Region, nearly 800,000 residents, hundreds of nonprofits, and a network of philanthropists with more than 1500 funds. View our [funding region](#).

Our Core Values

Learn about how we do our work through our [core values](#), [what we do](#), and our engagement in the Greater Hartford Community.

Our Commitment

To achieve our mission and create a truly vibrant region, we must take significant steps to dismantle structural racism and advance equity in social and economic mobility in Greater Hartford's Black and Latine communities. [Explore](#) our approach to achieve greater equity in our region.



Section 2: Community Funds Program Overview

The Community Funds Program at Greater Hartford Gives partners with volunteer committees to support residents in our region in taking ownership around the needs in their towns, encourages broad and inclusive civic engagement, and anchors Greater Hartford Gives in each town. [Learn](#) more about the history and role of Community Funds.

Each of the 29 towns within the Foundation’s region has a volunteer committee (committee) that is composed of town residents. The committee is inclusive, representative, and reflective of all the residents of that community.



Community Fund Committees

The Community Funds Program at Greater Hartford Gives takes a participatory philanthropy approach that involves community members and other stakeholders in the grantmaking process.

The role of the committee is to:

1. Design and lead a process to identify and learn about community needs.
2. Use learning to inform Request for Proposals and funding decisions.
3. Make grant recommendations to the Foundation.
4. Debrief grantmaking cycles and learn from community partners.

Committees have been forming and reforming since 2019. Some towns have well-established committees, and others are taking shape. **This handbook and guidelines apply to all committee volunteers, helping to clarify roles and responsibilities.**

Community Funds committees are supported by the Foundation through designated staff liaisons.

Committee Composition and Standards

Committees undertake their volunteer work in an **inclusive manner**, ensuring that prospective and current volunteers feel **valued, involved, and respected** for the perspectives, experiences, and ideas they bring. Inclusion and equity are essential to effective committee service and decision-making.

Accordingly, committees must:

- **Maintain no fewer than five (5) and no more than 15 appointed volunteer members.**

- Maintain a committee composition that meaningfully reflects the town’s demographics in a way that fosters inclusion, equity, and respect. **Committees are expected to regularly assess and address gaps in representation as part of recruitment and succession planning, with support from, and in consultation with, the staff liaison.**
- Designates at least one [administrative volunteer](#) who serves as the committee’s primary point of contact with the Foundation and coordinates communication with the assigned staff liaison.

Volunteer Requirements for Community Fund Committees

Volunteer Eligibility Requirements

To serve on a Community Fund Committee, individuals must meet the minimum requirements:

- Reside in the town they are seeking to serve
- Be at least 14 years of age (anyone younger than 18 must gain parental/guardian consent through the Parent/Guardian Consent Form for Youth Participation.
- Agree to comply with the [Foundation’s Policies](#) and the guidelines outlined in this Volunteer Handbook

Ineligible Individuals

The following individuals are not eligible to serve as a volunteer on a Community Fund Committee:

- Candidates for elected office, elected officials, and their immediate family members living in the same household
- Individuals who have donated to a Community Fund within the past 12 months
- Current Foundation staff

Ongoing Eligibility and Disclosure

Volunteers must reaffirm their eligibility annually by signing the Volunteer Agreement. If a volunteer becomes ineligible at any time (for example, by becoming a candidate for elected office), they must promptly notify their committee and assigned staff liaison. Volunteers with questions regarding their eligibility status should contact the staff liaison.

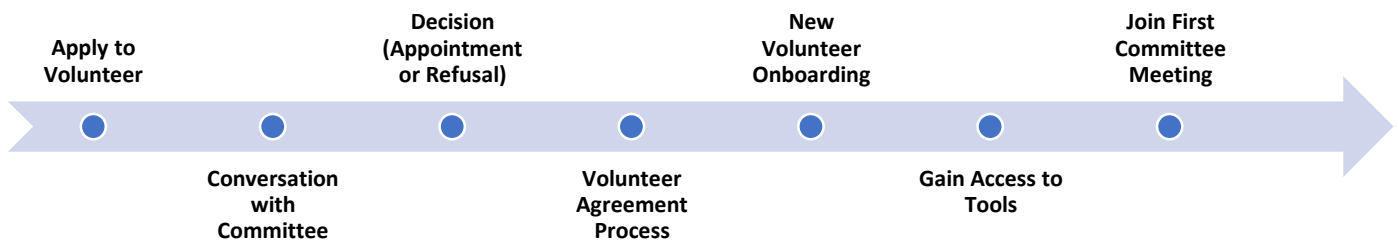
Getting Involved

To learn about volunteering with Community Funds or to nominate a community member, email communityfunds@greaterhartfordgives.org or call 860-548-1888.

Individuals interested in serving are encouraged to complete the online [volunteer application](#) to begin the Community Funds volunteer journey.

Typical Volunteer Recruitment and Onboarding Process for New Volunteers:

The volunteer recruitment and onboarding process typically begins with the committee assessing its composition and capacity. When a need is identified, prospective volunteers move through the following steps. While interest is always appreciated, not all applicants may be invited to serve at a given time, as selection depends on current committee needs, composition, and alignment with the committee’s work and the Foundation’s goals.



Time Commitment & Participation Expectations

Committees typically establish their annual meeting calendar at the beginning of the year and revisit it as needed. Most committees meet **monthly for 60–90 minutes, though schedules may vary by town**. Committees are encouraged to take planned breaks during the summer months or around major holidays, as appropriate.

In addition to meetings, volunteers should expect time commitments outside scheduled meetings, which may include learning about community needs and assets through data review, community listening sessions, and conversations facilitated or supported by the staff liaison to inform grantmaking, outreach, and review of grant materials.

The most time-intensive period is generally during **proposal review**, when volunteers read applications and participate in discussion prior to submitting grant recommendations to the Foundation. Volunteers are expected to communicate early with both the committee and staff liaison if scheduling barriers arise—particularly during proposal reviews—so the committee can plan accordingly and maintain continuity.

Community Funds Grantmaking Process

The Community Funds Program at Greater Hartford Gives is housed within the Foundation’s Community Impact Department, which leads the Foundation strategic grantmaking and community partnerships to strengthen well-being and advance equitable outcomes across Greater Hartford. Through this structure, Community Fund committees receive guidance, training, and operational support, and benefit from shared evaluation, learning, and community engagement practices that **strengthen grantmaking quality and consistency across the Foundation**.

Community Fund committees lead grantmaking processes on a regular basis, with at least one grantmaking cycle conducted each year. **The role of the committee is to determine how it will engage in participatory grantmaking for a given year. Accordingly, committees must:**

- Design and lead a process to identify and learn about community needs.
- Establish a grantmaking timeline, goals, and funding priorities informed by data and learnings from community outreach.
- Determine the maximum amount of current use funds to make available for grantmaking.
Note: Staff liaison can support committees in understanding town fund balances and available funding.
- Draft a Request for Proposal (RFP) that outlines funding priorities, eligibility criteria, and application parameters.
- Share the Community Funds Common Application and guiding documents with prospective local organizations.
- Engage in a meaningful and equitable grant proposal review process, using grantmaking rubric provided by the Foundation to guide review and discussion.
- Make funding recommendations to the Foundation based on the committee’s review and deliberation.
- Announce grant awards publicly following the Foundation’s final approval and in accordance with Marketing guidance ([see Marketing guidelines](#)).
- Allocate administrative funds in alignment with the committee’s established timeline and goals ([see Administrative Funds](#))

This graphic highlights the committee’s role in the grantmaking process. Additional review, approval, and administrative steps are carried out by the Foundation.



While each committee determines its grantmaking timeline, goals, and town funding priorities, grantmaking occurs within the Foundation’s stewardship and oversight framework. Committees should note the following:

- The Foundation is the ultimate steward of each Community Fund. Nonprofits receiving a Community Fund grant are **grantees of the Foundation and not of the committee**.
- The Foundation conducts **all required due diligence** on recommended grants to verify eligibility, compliance, and alignment with Foundation policies before any awards are approved.

- The Foundation, **when necessary, may contact and communicate directly with grantees** to ask clarifying questions, address concerns, or support successful grant implementation.
- Community Funds are the Foundation’s assets, and all grantmaking must adhere to the Foundation’s requirements.
- Committees cannot rename Community Funds or create separate programs or develop grantmaking initiatives in partnership with other entities.

Fundraising and Soliciting Donations

While fundraising is the primary responsibility of the Foundation, committees can support fundraising specifically for their town’s current use funds. Committee members may tell the story of their fund and invite interested individual donors to **donate \$15.00 - \$5,000 through the Foundation’s [online giving portal](#) using a credit/debit card**. For donations of more than \$5,000, contact your staff liaison, who will connect the donor with the Foundation’s [Advancement team](#).

Donations are tax-deductible, and donors will receive an acknowledgment letter from the Foundation. The Foundation will also alert committees when a donation has been received.

Committees **may not raise funds** through fundraising nights, parties, and events, including but not limited to restaurant nights, bake sales, car washes, approaching businesses for donations, or similar activities.

To mitigate the actual or perceived conflict of interest, **active committee members may not donate to any Community Fund**. There is at least a 12-month waiting period for community members who have donated to a town fund to join a committee as a volunteer. We encourage you to seek support from the staff liaison for inquiries regarding Community Fund donations.

Volunteer Expenses and Financial Support

Committees may incur some incidental expenses for materials and resources to aid in the work of grantmaking. The Foundation will provide an administrative budget (“Admin Funds”) for each committee to reimburse volunteers for these expenses. **The amount of Admin Funds is determined by the Foundation annually and may not be carried over from year to year.**

Allowable Expenses	Not Allowable Expenses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acts of Humanity, Annual \$100 limit on greeting cards or small gifts for committee members – birthday, death in the family, graduation, wedding ● Mailing services and supplies ● Marketing (advertisements) ● Meeting space fees for committee meetings, recruitment, information sessions, and grantee receptions. Note: Consult with the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Any Items not listed under allowable expenses ● Alcohol ● Gift Cards ● Any vendor contracts and/or lease agreements (see Financial Actions Out of Scope for Committees)

<p>staff liaison for examples of free or low-cost spaces, as well as for any certificate of insurance needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office supplies (paper, pens, name tags, certificates, tape, flier holders, thank you cards) • Provisions for language accessibility • Printing/Copying services and supplies • Refreshments for both committee and public meetings • Signage (posters, banners, fliers) • Tables and tablecloths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platform subscriptions (ZOOM, Survey Monkey, Canva, Calendly) without pre-approval.
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For planning purposes, each committee completes an administrative fund expenditure budget using the Community Funds Budget Template each January and submits it to the staff liaison for review and approval. Only expenses included in the approved budget, or otherwise reviewed and pre-approved by the staff liaison, are eligible for reimbursement. **Expenses incurred outside the approved budget or without prior liaison approval may not be reimbursed.** Any additional or unanticipated expenditure must receive **advance approval from the staff liaison** before costs are incurred.

Reimbursement for Admin Fund Expenses

For reimbursement through Admin Funds, volunteers may submit allowable expenses via email with receipts attached to their staff liaison, who will review expenses before processing the reimbursement request. **For prompt reimbursement, please ensure receipts are submitted via email within 30 days of the expense.** To ensure receipts are applied to the correct year, the final deadline to submit receipts is December 15. **The Foundation has the right to refuse reimbursement of expenses that are not allowed.**

Financial Support

The Foundation recognizes that there may be qualified community members eager to volunteer but whose economic situations do not allow them to incur expenses directly related to volunteer activities. In some cases, this includes committee members whose economic situations make it financially unfeasible to wait for reimbursement for expenses paid by the Admin Fund. Community members and/or committee members who identify with either of these situations are encouraged to consult privately and in confidence with the staff liaison to determine if the Foundation can assist with some or all incidental expenses necessary to fulfill their volunteer role on a case-by-case basis.

Financial Actions Out of Scope for Committees

Community Fund committees are not distinct and separate organizations. This means that committee volunteers **may not make financial or contractual decisions on behalf of Community Funds nor the Foundation.** Financial actions that are prohibited for committee volunteers include but are not limited to:

- Opening bank checking or savings accounts for or on behalf of the Foundation and/or any Community Fund committee
- Negotiating, entering, nor signing contracts with vendors of any kind on behalf of the Foundation and/or Community Fund committee

Connecticut State Tax Exempt Number

Volunteers may not directly utilize the Foundation’s Connecticut Tax Exempt Number. In some instances, the Foundation’s state tax-exempt status can be beneficial in receiving nonprofit discounts and access to meeting spaces. In these instances, volunteers should contact the staff liaison with ample turnaround time for guidance in applying for discounts.

Communication and Technology Tools

The Foundation takes both data security and communication between committees, grantees, and the Foundation seriously. To support this, the Foundation provides standardized Google Workspace tools for committee use, including shared email and group communication, document storage, and calendars. The Foundation also provides each committee with a dedicated Zoom license to support the administration of their own virtual meetings, including committee meetings and information sessions. Each committee will receive a shared email group, a shared drive, a calendar, and Zoom license credentials.

Section 3: Volunteer Lifecycle and Support

Our Commitment

The Foundation acknowledges that volunteers contribute in unique ways, providing various levels of time and commitment and that their volunteerism can benefit the communities the Foundation serves, its staff, and the volunteers themselves. The Foundation values the contributions made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in ways that are inclusive of a wide range of perspectives and experiences, supportive, and that enhance the Foundation’s goals and volunteer experience.

The Foundation recognizes its responsibility to provide appropriate volunteer training, support, and resources to perform volunteer positions in a successful, productive, and purposeful manner.

Volunteer Definition

Volunteering is an important expression of community involvement supported and encouraged by the Foundation. **Anyone who donates their services under the direction and on behalf of the Foundation without compensation is considered a volunteer.**

Volunteers are not employees of the Foundation. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff. Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers and to foster good working relationships between them. Volunteers must work collaboratively with their staff liaisons and Foundation staff.

Administrative Volunteers

Administrative volunteers are committee members who hold designated leadership or administrative responsibilities. This includes volunteers appointed as committee chair, co-chairs, and secretaries.

Administrative roles are elected by committee members and appointed by the staff liaison. Prior to assuming an administrative role, the Foundation reviews proposed appointments and confirms that candidates meet role expectations and qualifications. Position descriptions for administrative roles are available on the [Community Funds Resources](#) page

Each committee **must maintain at least one administrative volunteer**, who serves as the committee's primary point of contact with the Foundation. Committees must notify the staff liaison of any changes to administrative roles in a timely manner on behalf of the committee.

If a committee does not have an Administrative Volunteer in place, the staff liaison will work with the committee to identify an interim point person and support the committee in recruiting and electing new leadership as soon as possible.

Volunteer Coordination

All volunteers have a designated staff liaison who is paid staff of the Foundation or an appointed administrative volunteer to offer guidance and advice to help volunteers carry out tasks effectively. Designated staff liaisons have responsibility for the development, management, and coordination of volunteer activity within the Foundation. There is a presumption of mutual support, communication, collaboration, and reliability between staff liaisons and volunteers. Volunteers will be informed of whom to contact to receive support and direction.

The Foundation will provide every volunteer with resources through the entire volunteer lifecycle, including Recruitment, Selection, Appointment, Support, Training, Feedback, Appreciation, and Release.

Recruitment

Community Funds volunteer opportunities will be promoted on the Foundation's [website](#). Targeted volunteer recruitment may also happen at the local level, with committee members recruiting community members using an inclusive approach that ensures the volunteer committees are representative and reflective of members of their community. To support equitable recruitment practices, the Foundation will provide town profiles to assist committees in learning and understanding the demographics of their communities. Contact the staff liaison for support in recruiting committee members, including requests for town profiles.

Upon recruitment, every prospective volunteer must initially **complete the online Community Funds [volunteer application](#)**.

Selection

Volunteers are selected based on their qualifications for the volunteer position, ability to perform necessary duties, and willingness and availability to participate in required training. To ensure all volunteers and prospective volunteers have equal access to activities and opportunities, we affirm our commitment to diversity in recruiting, selecting, placing, and recognizing volunteers.

During the selection process, committees will engage volunteer candidates in a short conversation to gauge interest. After being selected for a volunteer role, and approved by the Foundation, candidates **must complete the [online Volunteer Agreement](#) agreeing to follow the Volunteer Handbook and the volunteer policies and procedures identified within.**

Placement

Prospective volunteers may be selected, appointed, and placed in a volunteer role by Foundation staff, or an administrative volunteer designated by the Foundation. **The Foundation has ultimate responsibility and authority in all volunteer decisions, including volunteer recruitment, selection, and placement.**

Every attempt will be made to place volunteers in positions that match their skills and interests and the needs of the Foundation and the volunteers. For candidates who cannot be placed in their preferred role, the needs of the Foundation will take precedence over the needs of the individual. **Committee members may volunteer for a maximum of six years total which includes any years of service as an administrative volunteer.**

Position Descriptions

Each volunteer role has a written volunteer position description that defines the position's specific duties and responsibilities, qualifications, required training and term of appointment. A complete listing of volunteer position descriptions and the volunteer agreement may be found on the [Community Funds resources webpage](#). Volunteers will receive a copy of their volunteer position description upon appointment.

Volunteer Support

The Foundation will support all volunteers in their roles in the following ways:

- Provide ongoing support through a designated contact person (staff liaison and/or administrative volunteer) to answer questions and/or give direction
- Provide additional support for newly formed committees or reforming; facilitating meetings as needed
- Assist with guidelines on grantmaking, community building, committee outreach, and civic engagement
- Assist committees in establishing and following inclusive processes and decision-making
- Provide required training

- Assist with conflict mediation
- Offer learning and networking opportunities
- Provide safety guidelines for working with youth 14 and over and other vulnerable populations
- Give marketing tools and guidance
- Maintain and monitor town funds and grantmaking
- Approve grants, provide grant award letters to grantees, and disburse funds
- Support reimbursement of [allowable committee Admin Fund expenses](#)

Training and Development

The Foundation values volunteer learning as a method to ensure informed, equitable, and inclusive grantmaking activities within the Community Funds program, as well as an opportunity for volunteers to continue their personal development. To foster peer learning and sharing, the Foundation will create opportunities for committee members to come together to learn and build relationships across town committees.

Preparation or training is required for most volunteer roles and will be discussed upon placement. Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given the necessary information to fulfill their volunteer position. Refusal or inability to participate in the required training can result in a volunteer's release from, or non-appointment to, a position.

The Foundation provides quarterly virtual onboarding training for new volunteers. During these sessions, volunteers are introduced to the Foundation, Community Funds program, and volunteer roles, and provided with the [Volunteer Policies](#), this Volunteer Handbook, position descriptions, and other program resources and materials.

Feedback

In the spirit of continual learning and improving the Community Funds program, the Foundation staff may periodically assess committees' community impact with the purposes to:

1. Review structure and performance of the committee within their community
2. Review community impact in terms of number of grants awarded and balances within the town's immediate or current use funds and/or Admin Funds
3. Determine additional support committee members may request and/or require

Foundation staff may also assess individual volunteer experience with the purposes to:

1. Review volunteer's performance in their volunteer position
2. Give an opportunity to provide feedback to the Foundation
3. Determine the volunteer's interest in continuing in the position or exploring other options

Reappointment

Volunteers may be reappointed by the Foundation or an administrative volunteer designated by the Foundation after completing the annual Volunteer Agreement. Reappointment is contingent upon the volunteer's continued acceptance of position accountabilities, expectations, and time commitment as outlined in the Volunteer Agreement.

Because Volunteer Agreements are renewed annually; **reappointment occurs when a volunteer reviews and signs the updated agreement for the applicable year.** The Foundation reserves the right to decline reappointment.

Recognition

The Foundation values the contributions of its volunteers and recognizes their service through various avenues. Volunteers may be recognized formally and informally by the Foundation or within their committee or group structure.

Release

Volunteers may need or want to resign from the volunteer position prior to the end of their appointed term. The Foundation requests the volunteers to resign by written notification to the appointed administrative volunteer and Foundation staff liaison.

A volunteer can only be released from their position by Foundation staff. Administrative and/or committee members may not release other volunteers from their positions. If a volunteer is released from their role, the staff liaison will contact the committee's administrative volunteers and provide guidance.

The Foundation may release a volunteer for any reason, at its sole discretion, including but not limited to:

- Any breach of the Community Funds Volunteer Agreement
- Failure to complete training/onboarding required for the volunteer position
- Failure to comply with Foundation policies
- Exhibiting harmful behavior and/or harassment to other committee members, Foundation staff, and/or grantees
- Inability or failure of the volunteer to complete the requirements for the position
- Misappropriation of funds
- Providing false, incomplete, or misleading information on the Community Funds Volunteer Application
- Restructuring or elimination of volunteer positions

Section 4: Greater Hartford Gives Volunteer Policies

The Greater Hartford Gives Foundation, formerly Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, maintains a series of policies that help ensure our mission, core values, strategy, and norms align with our vision to be a high-impact organization and further our commitment to the Greater Hartford region and its residents. Volunteers are expected to be familiar with [policies relevant to Foundation volunteers](#).

A policy is an established position that must be followed. Policies provide consistency of actions, give directions, and minimize the need for risk management. Difficulty or inconvenience in carrying out a policy's requirements shall not be used as an excuse for not adhering to the policy. Only the Foundation may make, change, or adapt the policies pertaining to volunteers. **Community Funds volunteers may not make, change, or adopt policies.**

Confidentiality Statement & Protection of Confidential Information Policy

As a volunteer of Greater Hartford Gives, you will have access to information that is considered confidential and proprietary in nature and as such must be held in confidence. Volunteers are asked to review the [Confidentiality Statement & Protection of Confidential Information Policy](#) when they join the Community Funds Program and acknowledge their understanding and agreement with a signature of the Community Funds Volunteer Agreement.

Conflict of Interest Policy

The Foundation's Conflict of Interest Policy, Guidelines and Disclosure Form are intended to provide guidance regarding perceived or actual conflicts of interest and ensure that organizations with which our staff or Community Funds volunteers are affiliated outside the scope of their engagement have no unfair advantage or even the appearance of such an advantage in seeking opportunities at the Foundation. Each year, you will be asked to review our [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) and disclose any potential conflicts.

Nondiscrimination Policy

Greater Hartford Gives does not discriminate against any person or group of people based on their race, color, creed, age, gender identity, or any other group, status, or characteristics. Volunteers are expected to review, understand, and follow the [Nondiscrimination Policy](#).

Whistleblower Policy

The Foundation is committed to lawful and ethical behavior in all activities. Employees, volunteers, consultants, vendors, and any other agents of the Foundation are asked to review the Foundation's [Whistleblower Policy](#) and Procedures for guidance on their reporting responsibilities and information on the handling of reported violations, protection against retaliation, and the confidentiality of any disclosed information.

Section 5: Greater Hartford Gives Volunteer Guidelines

This section includes volunteer support guidance on meeting conduct, conflict resolution, marketing and communications, and speaking with the media.

Meeting Conduct

When volunteers participate in committee work—whether in meetings, in the community, or in collaboration with Foundation staff—they represent the Foundation’s values and **work in partnership with the Foundation to guide the responsible use of community resources**.

Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is professional, respectful, welcoming, and inclusive, and to always support productive dialogue and sound decision-making.

To promote trust, safety, and sound decision-making, all committee meetings and committee-related gatherings, whether in-person, virtual, or hybrid, **must be alcohol-free**. This expectation applies to any event held in any committee or Foundation capacity, including social gatherings. Volunteers are expected to participate free from impairment that could affect judgment, behavior, or decision-making.

Meeting Norms

Committees are encouraged to adopt and uphold respectful, equitable norms such as:

- Listening to understand
- Speaking with care and respect
- Making spaces for all voices and avoiding interruptions
- Disagreeing with ideas, not people
- Using clear and accessible language
- Honoring confidentiality

Committees should establish and revisit norms at least annually, particularly as new members join, to ensure shared expectations remain clear. If concerns arise, they should be addressed early and constructively by returning to agreed-upon norms. Volunteers may contact the staff liaison for guidance or support. Ongoing or serious concerns will be addressed in accordance with the Conflict Resolution Procedure in this handbook.

Conflict Resolution

The Foundation has an established procedure for managing conflicts between volunteers. **Every volunteer may expect attention to their concerns and a fair resolution of the complaint without fear of jeopardizing their volunteer status.** The initiation of the following procedure to resolve the conflict will not restrict the Foundation from taking appropriate action, if necessary.

Step 1

Those in conflict are encouraged to try to resolve the matter informally amongst themselves. Volunteers may contact their staff liaison for guidance and support with self-resolution, if

necessary. It is expected that most if not all, situations will be resolved through informal conferences and communications at this step.

Step 2

When volunteers are unable to resolve a complaint through self-resolution, a volunteer should address their concern to their staff liaison for guidance on resolution. The staff liaison will document the situation and go through the Foundation staff protocol to resolve Community Funds volunteer conflicts which details the steps that must be followed to resolve the conflict.

Step 3

If a final resolution has not been met after following the steps, the volunteer(s) may request a meeting with the Foundation's [Community Funds strategy lead](#).

Marketing & Communications Guidelines

The Foundation encourages volunteers to strategically use marketing and communications tools to promote committee activities and grantmaking opportunities.

Committees must use the Foundation's brand standards and approved marketing tools. The Foundation will provide committees with marketing assets including a town-specific logo, design templates for flyers, social media language, and press release templates.

Social Media Usage

Some committees have created and/or used social media to promote committee activities. With the Foundation's updated branding beginning in 2026, **Community Fund Committees may not create or operate any social media accounts on behalf of a Community Fund on any platform.** This shift supports consistent branding and helps protect volunteer and Foundation security by reducing risks related to account access, credential sharing, and leadership transitions. Committee volunteers should work with the staff liaison for support in closing any existing accounts and notify the staff liaison once accounts have been deactivated.

Instead, the Foundation will maintain official online information for each town through the Foundation's website. **Committee members who use social media are encouraged to share and uplift committee activities through their personal accounts and to direct community members to the Foundation's official town landing page** for up-to-date information, application links, and committee contact details. For Example, "I'm a volunteer with the [Town] Community Fund at Greater Hartford Gives. Learn more and find current opportunities here: [Town Landing Page Link]."

Social media can be a powerful way to build awareness and community support for local grantmaking. When posting about your involvement with Community Funds, volunteers **must use discretion to protect the credibility of the Foundation, the Community Funds program, and community partners.** Volunteers must always comply with the Foundation's [confidentiality policy](#), including not sharing sensitive committee discussions or application details and must avoid creating an impression that views expressed represent the Foundation or Community Funds rather than personal opinions.

Town Foundation Website Landing Pages

Each town committee has its own unique [landing](#) page on the [Foundation's website](#). Volunteers may request content updates to their town's webpage that adheres to the formatting of their page, through their staff liaison. Webpage updates will be reviewed by the Foundation staff prior to posting and **may take up to two weeks to complete**. Updates not consistent with brand standards or the Foundation's goals will not be approved. **Volunteers may not make Community Fund town-specific websites.**

Speaking on behalf of Greater Hartford Gives and/or Community Fund Committee

Media (television, radio, print, blogs, podcasts, etc.) can be a great way to build awareness of the Foundation's Community Funds program and encourage local engagement. To ensure accuracy, consistency, and alignment with the Foundation's mission and strategic goals, **all media outreach and official media responses are coordinated through the Foundation.**

Committees may use press releases to build awareness of the Community Funds program, recruit volunteers, announce RFPs, and share grant awards. To do so, committee members should use the Foundation's press release template and submit it to their staff liaison for review and approval. After the Foundation provides feedback and approves the final version, the committee may share the approved press release with local outlets, following any guidance provided by the Foundation's communications team.

Volunteers are not official spokespeople for the Foundation or the Community Funds program. Volunteers are encouraged to share committee work in community settings (for example: civic groups, schools, faith communities, neighborhood associations), but **media interviews and direct outreach to media outlets are managed at the Foundation level.** If a committee would like media coverage, the first step is to contact the staff liaison, who will connect the committee with the Foundation's communications staff.

If a volunteer is contacted directly by a media outlet (for an interview, quote, or comment), the volunteer must not respond on behalf of the Foundation. Instead, the volunteer should notify their staff liaison as soon as possible and request guidance. Next steps may include referring the outlet to the Foundation's communications staff and/or Community Funds strategy lead, or coordinating a joint approach if appropriate.

Section 6: Additional Resources and Support

We know that starting a new volunteer role can be challenging, and there are many things to learn, including a new language. **This volunteer handbook and policies are a place to start your volunteer journey, and the Glossary is a place to learn new terms.** And know you are not alone. Your staff liaison and administrative volunteers are here to support you and help you engage in your town's Community Fund Committee.

Support

Questions? Feedback? Not sure where to get started? Email communityfunds@greaterhartfordgives.org, or call, 860-548-1888.

Thank you, and welcome; we're glad you're here!

Connect with Us

The Foundation offers various ways for people to connect with us, learn about our work, and get involved. To keep up-to-date on our work and important stories affecting our region, follow us on social media, including [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#). Subscribe to our [monthly newsletter](#) to keep informed about our work. Read about our latest grants and initiatives on our [News page](#), and learn about our organization by reading our latest [reports and publications](#). We want to hear from you; please [share](#) your feedback on how to improve our community.

Glossary of Terms

501(c)(3) Organization

501(c)(3) is a U.S. Internal Revenue Code tax designation for nonprofit organizations. Organizations that meet the 501(c)(3) requirements are exempt from federal income tax. The IRS recognizes more than 30 types of nonprofit organizations, but only those that qualify for 501(c)(3) status can say that donations made to them are tax deductible. Community Fund grants are awarded to 501(c)(3) organizations. Entities without a 501(c)(3) designation may work with a 501(c)(3) for eligibility. Committees should contact their staff liaison for guidance in these situations before recommending a grant.

Committee Decision-Making

Committees may determine how they make decisions either by consensus or full unanimous agreement. Regardless of the method used, a quorum is required for all decisions.

- **Consensus** is a decision-making method in which committee members work toward broad agreement. Consensus does not require full or unanimous agreement; rather, it indicates that members have had the opportunity to share perspectives and that the group can support the decision moving forward.
- **Full agreement** is a decision-making method in which all committee members present agree on a decision. Committees that choose this approach should be mindful that requiring unanimity may limit the ability to move decisions forward efficiently.
- A **quorum** is the minimum number of committee members who must be present to conduct official business or make decisions. For Community Fund Committees, a quorum is five (5) members. Decisions may not be made without a quorum, regardless of the decision-making method used.

Community Foundation

Community Foundations are tax-exempt, not-for-profit grantmaking public charities dedicated to improving the lives of people in a defined geographic area. They bring together the financial resources of individuals, families, and businesses to address community needs and support effective nonprofits in their communities. The [Greater Hartford Gives Foundation](#) is a community foundation.

Community Fund Assets: Current Use and Endowed Funds

Each Community Fund typically includes two types of funds, which support both immediate grantmaking and long-term sustainability. The Foundation manages both fund types in accordance with its investment, spending, and stewardship policies:

- **Current Use Funds** are available for grantmaking in the near term, typically within the current year or grantmaking cycle. Committees may recommend grants using these funds based on available balances and approved grantmaking plans.
- **Endowed Funds** are invested to provide long-term support for the community. The principal is preserved over time, while a portion of the fund's value, determined by the Foundation's spending policy, is made available for grantmaking each year. Endowed Funds allow a Community Fund to grow and support grantmaking across generations.

Fiscal Sponsored Organization

A fiscal sponsored organization is a group or project that does not have its own 501(c)(3) nonprofit status and instead operates under the legal and tax-exempt status of an eligible nonprofit fiscal sponsor. The fiscal sponsor assumes legal and financial responsibility for the sponsored organization, including receiving and managing funds in accordance with applicable laws and Foundation policies. For grantmaking purposes, Community Fund grants are awarded to the fiscal sponsor, not directly to the sponsored organization.

Grantmaking Eligibility

Grantmaking eligibility refers to the criteria an organization must meet to receive funding through a Community Fund. **While committees review proposals and make funding recommendations, the Foundation confirms eligibility and provides final approval for all grants.**

Eligibility criteria may include, but are not limited to:

- **501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations** in good standing
- **Organizations with an eligible fiscal sponsor**, when applicable
- **Municipalities or other eligible public entities**, as permitted under Foundation policy

Additional requirements, such as geographic service area, alignment with funding priorities, and compliance with Foundation policies, may also apply.

Grantmaking Rubric

A grantmaking rubric is an analytical tool that aids in objective decision-making. The grantmaking rubric will help committees evaluate and compare requests for proposals (RFP) that nonprofits submit for funding. The grantmaking rubric provides a systematic, transparent, simple tool to inform and record decisions. Each proposal is assessed and captured using the same rubric, which ensures fairness and equity in evaluation.

Community Funds Committee

The Community Funds Program at Greater Hartford Gives takes a participatory philanthropy approach that involves community members and other stakeholders in the grantmaking process. The role of the committee is to design and lead a process to identify community needs; evaluate which needs will be funded through community funds grants; make grant recommendations to the Foundation; provide updates to the Foundation; publicize grants after Foundation approval; and assist in tracking available funds for grantmaking.

Participatory Grantmaking

Participatory grantmaking is the practice of ceding grantmaking power to the very communities affected by funding decisions. In action, participatory grantmaking uplifts these communities by giving them the agency to decide who and what they fund. By centering affected communities in the grantmaking process, participatory grantmaking shifts unequal power dynamics inherent in philanthropy to those directly impacted from a values-based and equity-centered approach.

Request for Proposal (RFP)

A Request for Proposal (RFP) is a formal invitation to nonprofit organizations asking them to submit detailed proposals for specific funding opportunities. All Community Funds committees utilize RFPs to announce they are accepting grant proposals specific to their towns. RFPs represent opportunities for nonprofits to present their projects and potentially receive funding in return. The RFP template includes background information on the Community funds program; eligibility for receiving grants; proposal requirements; criteria for consideration; and other information specific to the Community Funds town committee's process including deadlines for submission and contact information.

Staff Liaison

A staff liaison is a paid staff member of the Foundation who works with and supports Community Funds volunteer committee members providing training and guidance. Committee members seeking information or support from the Foundation should contact the staff liaisons who will answer inquiries directly or act as a conduit to other Foundation departments.

Volunteer

A person who performs a service or other undertaking willingly and without pay is a volunteer. Anyone who donates their services under the direction and on behalf of the Foundation without compensation is considered a volunteer.

