

# Welcoming Communities 2025 Grant Guidelines



**Welcoming Communities Grants:** An investment in fostering a more welcoming York City through diverse, accessible, inclusive events.

Welcoming Community Grants is a grant program administered by Downtown Inc, made possible through the financial support of Better York, Powder Mill Foundation, the York County Community Foundation, and in partnership with the Cultural Alliance of York County.

The goal of the grant program is to identify and provide financial support to sustainable community events that contribute to creating a welcoming and connected community for all in York City - through diversity, accessibility and cultural representation.

Creating a more connected and welcoming community through:

Community-wide activities like festivals (of any size) and live arts that bring different kinds of people together to share experiences and foster broader connection and understanding (of music, culture, history, language, etc.)

Art-making and learning activities for adults and children that provide opportunities for hands-on or in-person growth and learning.

Arts/music/culture/music/history/theatre experiences that provide accessibility to residents of various socio-economics and encourage community building and community connections in York City.

Eligibility:

- Individuals or organizations may apply. Applicants are not required to be a 501(c)3.
- New programs and events, as well as established events are eligible.

- Priority will be given to events that have not received a Welcoming Communities Grant in 2024.
- New programs and events, as well as established events are eligible.
- Events must be held in York City between 5/1/2025 and 5/1/2026.
- Events must be open to the public at no cost.

Grant Amounts:

- Grants amounts up to \$2,000 will be considered.
- The average grant amount is \$1,500 or less.
- Applicants are limited to one grant award per funding year (calendar year).
- A total of \$18,000 in grant funds will be allocated in 2025, with \$3,000 earmarked for events in Foundry Plaza.

Grant Schedule:

Letter of Interest portal opens Monday, February 3, 2025.

- Deadline to submit Letter of Interest is Monday, March 3, 2025, at 5pm ET.
- Selected applicants will be invited to fill out a Full Application by Friday, March 7, 2025.
- Full applications are due Monday, March 24.
- Applicants will be notified of funding decision and grants will begin disbursement in April 2025 (pending completion of grantee paperwork).

**Note:** In the interest of treating all applicants fairly, Downtown Inc. will not entertain requests for funding events or programs outside of the annual application period.

Review Criteria:

Grant applications will be scored on the basis of:

- **Potential event impact** – How will the event contribute to a hospitable community that fosters community connection, cohesiveness, and inclusivity in York City?

- **Inclusivity** – Cultural diversity representation; provides ways for cultural traditions and celebrations to take place in safe spaces; family and age friendly; accessible to all residents and visitors; no admission for attendance.
- **Event planning and management** – Whether the event is in its 10th year or just launching this year, the ability to demonstrate the following will be key in the review process: a well-researched and thoughtful planning process, appropriate budget, sufficient staffing and volunteer considerations, evidence of sponsorship support if applicable, will all be taken into consideration.

Welcoming Communities Grant Review Criteria

Downtown Inc, administering the Welcoming Communities Grants on behalf of program funders Better York, Powder Mill Foundation and the York County Community Foundation, assembles a review committee to assess applications based on the following criteria.

**Fostering Community Connection.....40 points**

How well does this event contribute to a welcoming community that fosters community connection in York City? Does the name, theme, featured activities foster connection to and/or understanding of the history, people, culture, spirit of York City?

**Access and Inclusivity.....40 points**

Does the event embrace cultural representation and inclusivity? Does it represent the diversity of people, cultures, interests of the residents of York City? Is it family and age friendly; accessible?

**Event Planning and Management.....20 points**

Does the event proposal demonstrate a researched and thoughtful planning process; appropriate budget for the scale of the event; staffing and volunteer considerations? Is there evidence of solid knowledge of the target audience and market demand? Is there commitment of other support, such as in-kind donations, letters of support, shared services, sponsorship or other investment?