

Organization Name: We Love Grants

Project Title: Bridging the Generational Wealth Gap in East County

Project Strategy Narrative

Please describe the specific population/community that your organization targets and explain your relationship to this population/community. Why is your organization uniquely suited to have a positive impact on this population/community?

This project will target high school juniors and seniors in the underserved communities of East County. Our organization, We Love Grants (WLG), has been working to empower Thumgomrey County youth vulnerable to social exclusion by mobilizing and engaging them to create positive change in their communities since 2012. Our activities include youth engagement, skills-building, and cultivation of healthy support networks for youth to develop agency and set them up for success. Over the past 11 years, we have built a reputation of trust within our community and developed a unique relationship with youth in East County through completion of numerous initiatives specifically tailored to their needs, optimally positioning us to have a positive impact on this target population.

What is the issue or need within your target population/community and how will the proposed project address this issue or need? Please explain in as much detail as necessary.

According to Thumgomrey County Government OpenData, East County has the highest concentration of people living below the poverty line. East County also has the largest populations of immigrants and people of color who have been systemically denied opportunities for socioeconomic mobility. Based on several studies conducted by the American Dream Institute and the Generational Wealth Builders, financial literacy is the foundation for building generational wealth among youth from underserved communities. Based on our extensive experience working with East County youth, they lack access to financial literacy opportunities because classes are not offered through formal education and their parents do not have time or resources to provide this kind of education at home because they often have to work multiple jobs to support the family. As such, WLG is proposing to conduct a series of financial literacy workshops taught by professional financial advisors targeting youth in East County.

What are your organization's current capabilities to implement the proposed project in a culturally, linguistically, and/or technically proficient way for the target population/community? Please note your capacity, including human and financial resources, to implement projects as well as past experience. Feel free to reference other Tasks in this application for more detail instead of repeating it in this narrative.

Our hyperlocal approach to working with youth communities in Thumgomrey County has been refined through implementation of over 200 successful initiatives targeting youth over the past 11 years. We lead with an emphasis on inclusive development of solutions together with the communities we serve. Specifically, we have established an East County Youth Advisory Council (ECYAC) in 2015 comprising a diverse group of 11 youth that meet regularly to discuss community needs, identify priorities, and brainstorm ideas for initiatives. ECYAC advocate for East County youth with Thumgomrey County Government and are actively involved in implementing community initiatives with our organization. This approach gives us access to hard-to-reach communities and ensures our programming is responsive to their actual needs. We designed the proposed pilot project together with ECYAC using this approach. We have already secured commitment from several financial advisory service providers to provide subject matter expertise and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with East County High School to provide space and needed support in implementing this project.

Overall, how will the requested funding have a positive outcome on your organization and target population/community?

The requested funding will allow us to implement the proposed pilot project, which aims to provide 100 youth in underserved communities of East County with critical financial literacy skills through workshops taught by professional financial advisors. As evidence shows, such skills are integral to helping bridge the generational wealth gap created through decades of systemic denial to fully participate in economic, social, and civic opportunities among communities of color and immigrant communities.