

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Funds Grant Guidelines

About the Legacy Funds

The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Funds support projects that reflect Mr. Wilson's personal passions and make a lasting difference across southeast Michigan.

The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Funds were established at the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan as an endowment to honor Mr. Wilson's legacy in perpetuity. The Funds support four areas of interest: Caregivers, Design & Access, Youth Sports, and Grosse Pointe Community Assets. Grants made from these Funds are distinct from, and awarded separately from, grants made directly by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation.

Fund Overviews

Caregivers Fund

This Fund supports efforts to improve support for caregivers — whether paid, voluntary, or family — through skills, resources, education, and respite. Caregivers are those who look after dependent individuals who require caregiving. Projects supported through this Fund should have a direct impact on caregivers. Preference is given to requests that support caregivers of older adults.

Design & Access Fund

This Fund supports pre-planning, development, and/or construction costs for projects that increase the walkability and bikeability of local communities and/or expand outdoor recreational activity within the region, with the goal of improving health and quality of life for residents of all ages. Waterways, greenways, and recreation corridors are of particular interest. Neighborhood-specific projects will also be considered if they include significant community engagement and impact at the neighborhood level. Projects are preferred, but not required, to:

- Incorporate green design to be environmentally sustainable
- Incorporate universal access design to best serve people of all abilities

Large sports facilities are not of interest to this Fund.

- Trail maintenance requests are not eligible for this Fund. Visit the [Wilson Trails Maintenance Fund](#) page to learn more.

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Youth Sports Fund

This Fund provides opportunities for all children to be active through sport* and recreation, regardless of race, gender identity, ZIP code, or ability. The Fund aims to intentionally address systemic retention and participation issues impacting the region's youth sport culture by:

- Expanding equitable access to a variety of sports opportunities that are nearby, affordable, and widely available
- Facilitating high-quality engagement in youth sports by emphasizing variety, safety, and positive youth development
- Strengthening the organizational capacity of youth sports providers

We welcome applications advancing the priorities of Project Play: Southeast Michigan and aligned with best practices developed by the Aspen Institute Sports & Society: Project Play, including the "8 Plays." Requests must address at least one of the 8 Plays: (1) ask kids what they want, (2) reintroduce free play, (3) encourage sport sampling, (4) revitalize in-town leagues, (5) think small, (6) design for development, (7) train all coaches, and (8) emphasize prevention.

- These objectives link to the goals identified in the [2022–2024 Project Playbook](#), developed by Project Play: Southeast Michigan.

Tackle football and boxing programs are not eligible to apply. This Fund does not consider requests for traditional sporting equipment. Organizations seeking sports equipment should apply directly through our partners:

- [Good Sports](#), a national nonprofit providing brand-new sports equipment to kids in need
- [Leveling the Playing Field](#), which redistributes new and gently used sports equipment to expand access within youth sports and recreation programs

*All forms of physical activity which, through organized or casual play, aim to express or improve physical fitness and mental well-being. Participants may be motivated by internal or external reward, and competition may be with others or themselves. — Aspen Institute Sports & Society: Project Play

Grosse Pointe Community Assets Fund

This remains a broad yet competitive Fund that supports projects of anchor nonprofit organizations providing services and experiences to residents of the five Grosse Pointe communities, home to Mr. Wilson during his lifetime.

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Key Details

- Grant Amount: \$10,000–\$25,000 for Caregivers, Youth Sports, and Grosse Pointe Community Assets; up to \$50,000 for Design & Access
- Grant Term: Typically 12 months, *however, applicants may identify other time frames that would be more beneficial to spend the grant over.*
- Type of Support: Programming, and/or capital costs; Design & Access may also include planning costs and excludes programming
- Eligibility: 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, schools, and government entities

Who May Apply

Any 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, school, or government entity in southeast Michigan may apply for a grant from the Caregivers Fund, the Design & Access Fund, or the Youth Sports Fund. Southeast Michigan is defined as the seven counties of Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Monroe, Washtenaw, St. Clair, and Livingston.

Any 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, school, or government entity located in the five Grosse Pointe communities — the City of Grosse Pointe, Grosse Pointe Farms, Grosse Pointe Park, Grosse Pointe Shores, and Grosse Pointe Woods — may apply for a grant from the Grosse Pointe Community Assets Fund. In rare circumstances, organizations not located within the Grosse Pointes but serving their residents may also be considered.

- Organizations are limited to one application per funding category but may apply to multiple funding categories
- Multi-year grant requests will not be considered
- No grants will be made to individuals
- Requests outside of the Foundation's areas of interest will not be considered

Application Process

All applications must be submitted through the Community Foundation's online grant portal (MyCF). Applications are reviewed in accordance with the identified goals and objectives of each Legacy Fund and eligibility requirements. Sample review criteria include a sustainable organization structure and project design, project readiness, impact on the southeast Michigan community or target audience, and prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion in engaging program staff and participants. Projects that are innovative and fill critical community needs are given the highest priority, and requests that help build collaborations among organizations are encouraged but not required. Low priority is given to requests for ongoing operational costs, capital campaigns, annual fund drives, conferences, or other one-time events.

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Required Documents

Applicants should be prepared to submit:

- Project budget
- Organizational operating budget
- Most recent IRS Form 990 or equivalent tax filing
- For requests over \$25,000 (Design & Access only): a current audited financial statement

Additional Information

Organizations that received a grant from a Legacy Fund previously may apply again to the same Fund in successive years. There is no guarantee of funding from year to year; each year's applications are considered on their own merits, and the most competitive applications will be funded.

In most cases, the Legacy Funds support localized projects for which a small grant can make a significant difference. Applicants should not request funding for projects that are the same as, or substantially similar to, projects currently funded by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, which supports larger initiatives with broad impact and reach.

- More information about the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation's grantmaking can be found at ralphcwilsonjrfoundation.org.

Contact

For questions about this opportunity, please contact:

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