



CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY

The CWRU Community Enhancement Grant

Overview

The Community Enhancement Grant recognizes faculty, staff and student leaders who truly embody Case Western Reserve University's (CWRU's) passion for community engagement by creatively connecting the classroom, campus, and community. Through a juried process, activity leaders will be selected to receive grants in amounts up to \$5000. The best proposals are interdisciplinary, promote citizen participation and autonomy, and support student research. The Community Enhancement Grants affirm and current work being conducted by faculty, staff, and students while encouraging others to embrace the benefits of community engagement for student success, neighborhood enhancement, and ultimately benefiting the entire region.

About the Office of Local Government & Community Relations

The grant administering office, Local Government and Community Relations, serves as a liaison between CWRU and the local governments and communities of Northeast Ohio. We collect and disseminate information about the university's collective value and instrumental role in the local community. Our office identifies, updates, and promotes the university's extensive inventory of community outreach programs and partnerships throughout the Greater Cleveland region. We facilitate all public inquiries seeking university partnerships and services, coordinate the university's response to local government and community issues, as well as assist other campus departments on issues of local concern.

Defining "Community Engagement"

Community engagement--in the context of higher education--describes collaborations with larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually-beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in the spirit of partnership and reciprocity. The purpose of community engagement is to connect college and university resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching, and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.



CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY
Office of Government
and Community Relations

Application Deadline
Friday, March 13, 2026

What is the Community Enhancement Grant?

Open to: CWRU Faculty, Staff, or Student Groups
Maximum Award: \$5000

Community Enhancement Grants are grants intended to support the work of faculty, staff, or student organizations on programs, projects, or initiatives that are new or existing. These projects should exemplify strong community engagement and must occur in partnership with at least one of the following: a grassroots or faith-based organization; a community-based nonprofit institution; local business, government agency/office; or other public institution such as a public school or library.

Application Criteria & Requirements

- The proposal must align with the qualifications of the grant description
- Partner with at least one (1) new or existing community organization already engaged on the priority issue(s)
- The community partner organization must provide a letter of support that describes the nature of the existing or proposed partnership
- Clearly indicate and define faculty/staff and/or student roles
- Must be able to justify a specific need for funding
- Must advance equity, antiracism, and/or social justice in our community and/or on campus

Additional Preferred Considerations:

- Show proposed evidence of the sustainability of the project or partnership
- Help community partners in their research, evaluation, and/or capacity building
- Expand opportunities for scholarly research or creative activities by faculty, staff, or students
- Outcomes connect directly to CWRU student success, link to learning outcomes, or encourage student engagement and retention
- Enhance CWRU students' sense of community by participating in community engagement projects
- Timeliness of the project (why now?)
- Involve a partnership with another department, program, or center within the university

Use of Funding

Permissible	Not Permissible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplies • Materials • Equipment • Mileage reimbursement • Food, drinks, and refreshments • Payment to a non-profit organization or K-12 school • Payment to non-CWRU employed individuals to perform services • Payment to a business to perform services • Payment to a guest speaker • Payment to an individual providing training services • Student employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gift cards • Tuition assistance or scholarships for enrolled students • Paid student internships • Staff stipend or bonus • Faculty assigned time/release time

Application Process & Timeline

- Application period opens January 16, 2026 and closes at 11:59 PM on March 13, 2026
- The online application form must be completed and submitted (also letters of support and an itemized budget may be securely uploaded here) by 11:59 PM on March 13, 2026
- The applicant is responsible for meeting the deadline & extensions will not be accepted
- All expenses for the project must meet the criteria in the “Use of Funding” section
- All applications will be reviewed blindly by a jury of five (5) impartial members consisting of: Three (3) CWRU and two (2) non-CWRU representatives. There will be at least one (1) CWRU student member. This jury will be established by the Office of Local Government and Community Relations, and will not be competing for one of the grants
- **Awardees will be announced on or before March 27, 2026**
- The number and amount of the awards will depend upon the availability of funds
- The decisions of the jury will be final and appeals will not be accepted
- **If awarded, the Grant Reporting Form must be returned to the Office of Local Government and Community Relations by May 1, 2027**

Application Evaluation Rubric

	1	2	3	4
Community Relevance	Initiative does not address a need or opportunity that the community has identified.	Initiative somewhat addresses a need or opportunity that the community has identified.	Initiative addresses a need or opportunity that the community has identified.	Initiative addresses a clear need or opportunity that the community has concretely identified.
Community Benefit	Community does not indirectly or directly benefit from the initiative.	Community indirectly benefits from the initiative.	Community and at least half of its members directly benefits from the initiative.	Community and the majority of its members directly benefits from the initiative.
Balance of Partnership	The community partner (organization or leader) do not share in the responsibility, accountability and/or authority of the initiative.	The community partner (organization or leader) share in some of the responsibility, accountability and/or authority of the initiative.	The community partner (organization or leader) share in most of the responsibility, accountability and/or authority of the initiative. A partnership of equal value with the representative of the community is present.	The community partner (organization or leader) fully share in the responsibility, accountability and/or authority of the initiative. A real partnership of equal value with the representative of the community is present.
Effective Use of Funds	Ineffective use of funds. No benefit is served to the community.	Effective use of funds has a short term benefit to the community.	Effective use of funds has a long term benefit to the community.	Effective use of funds has a long term clear and defined benefit to the community and most of its members.
Advancing Equity	Does not address equity, antiracism, or social justice in our community and/or on campus.	Could potentially affect equity, antiracism, and social justice in our community and/or on campus.	Clearly addresses issues of equity, antiracism, and social justice in our community and/or on campus.	Sustainable constructs for equity, antiracism, and social justice in our community and/or on campus.

CWRU Community Enhancement Grant Application

Name of Applicant (project lead):

College/Department or student organization:

Please answer each question in 100 words or less.

1. Briefly describe your project. What roles do faculty/staff/students play?
2. Community Relevance: Does your initiative address a need or opportunity that the community has identified?
3. Community Benefit: How will residents, a neighborhood/city, or an organization directly benefit from your initiative?
4. Balance of Partnership: Does a community partner (organization or leader) share in the responsibility, accountability and/or authority of the initiative?
5. Effective Use of Funds: How, specifically, will you use the requested funds to enhance, expand and/or sustain your project?
6. Advancing Equity: How will you address issues of equity, antiracism, and social justice in our greater community and/or on campus?

CWRU Community Enhancement Grant Reporting Form

Name of Grantee:

College/Department or student organization:

1.) Briefly describe your project and its goals.

2.) Were the goals and objectives of the project met? Please provide details.

3.) Did you run into any problems implementing your project? If so, what were they and how were they resolved?

4.) Were there any positive or negative unexpected outcomes from your project? Please explain.

5.) Would this project have been possible if it were not for the Comm. Enhancement Grant?
☐ Yes ☐ No

6.) Did you receive other funding to support your project other than the Community Enhancement Grant? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7.) How was the grant used to support your project (e.g. materials, supplies, hiring a GA, transportation, etc.)

8.) Was your project associated with a course(s) that you teach? If so, please list the course name and number.

CWRU Community Enhancement Grant Reporting Form (2)

9.) Did you work with a community partner? Please list any school, nonprofit organization, religious institution, community group or governmental entity that you may have worked with during the course of your project.

10.) How many non-CWRU affiliated individuals participated in your project?

11.) Is your project ongoing or did it conclude?

12.) Do you plan to continue this project or organize a similar project in the future?

13.) How many people were impacted by your project and how?

14.) How many CWRU students participated in your project?

15.) What benefit was provided to your field of study, if any?

16.) What benefit was provided to the community (the constituency of your project) as a result of your project?

17.) Did your project receive any media attention? If so, please provide a copy or a link.

18.) Is there any additional information that you would like to share?

I attest that my responses accurately reflect the project outcomes.

Signature of Grantee:

Date:

Completed forms should be emailed to communityrelations@case.edu by May 1, 2027.