

Town of Williamstown
Application for Support of Non-Profit Organization

The Town of Williamstown receives occasional requests from non-profit organizations for partial funding in support of programs or projects that provide services for and benefits to town residents. This application form has been developed by the Finance Committee and the Select Board to assist in their evaluations of requests from non-profits seeking this support. The information collected will be used to consider whether or not requests for funding will appear on the warrant for Annual Town Meeting, and if action on these requests will be recommended by the Finance Committee and Select Board.

Projects for purposes addressed by the Community Preservation Act (open space, recreation, affordable housing and historical preservation) should follow procedures established by the Community Preservation Committee and should not use this application form and process.

Applications should be submitted each year to the Town Manager no later than January 15.

The application package must contain each of the following:

Completed application

A list of the current Board of Directors, indicating executive officers

A copy of the most recent independent CPA audit, financial review, or compilation for each non-profit organization participating in the proposal, a financial report signed by the President and Treasurer of the organization showing all revenues, expenses and financial assets

A copy of the most recent Massachusetts Form 3ABC filed and the 990 Tax Form, if such forms are required for the organization

Application

Date: 1/31/23

Organization Name: Williamstown Community Preschool

Address: 777 Main St Williamstown

Telephone: _____ (413) 458-4476 _____

Contact Person: Nathaniel Anderson

Email Address: rector@stjohnswilliamstown.org

Program or Project Name: _____

What is the benefit to Williamstown residents of the proposed project? _____

_____ (please see addendum) _____

Amount requested: \$50,000

Has the Town of Williamstown funded your organization or program before, **including** payments for services or through the Community Preservation Act? YES X NO _____

If yes, please indicate the year and amount awarded (up to the past 3 years).

Year 2021 Amount \$50,000 Purpose Operating Expenses

Year 2022 Amount \$50,000 Purpose Operating Expenses

Year _____ Amount _____ Purpose _____

On a separate page, briefly describe your program or project including a budget for proposed use of the funds requested. Is this a new program? How will it benefit Williamstown residents? Include the total number of persons expected to be served by the program or project for which you are requesting funding. How many of those served are Williamstown residents? How do you determine residency of the people you serve? Identify those who will administer the program.

What percentage of your total organization budget would be covered by the request? 8%

Would this grant enable your organization to obtain additional funding? no

If yes, explain _____

Are the funds to be used for purposes that fall within those covered by the Community Preservation Act (open space, recreation, affordable housing and historical preservation)?

YES ___ NO X If yes, explain _____

Please complete the information requested in the following table. Feel free to provide a separate page with an explanatory narrative where needed.

Item	Current year	Previous year
Total annual revenues of organization	688,354	571,626
Total contributions received	658,354	524,878
Total grants received from sources other than the Town of Williamstown	315,740	322,290
Total grants and payments received from the Town of Williamstown	50,000	50,000
Total dues, memberships, and other revenues received	1,611	583
Total annual expenditures of organization	715,672	661,754
Total salaries and employee benefits paid	592,866	551,571
Combined balance of reserves, savings, CDs, endowments and other accounts	1,147,544	570,089
Number of employees (Full Time Equivalents)	13	13
Number of volunteers	0	0
Total persons served by organization	69	68
Total persons served by organization who are residents of Williamstown	46	46

Evaluation of success

On a separate page, describe how and when you will evaluate the success of the program or project for which support is requested. Examples might include consumer/client surveys, focus groups, or employee self-evaluations. Attach a copy of evaluation of effectiveness or success from the most recent year available.

A funded project requires that the organization submit a report to the Town Manager by March 31 following the year in which the funding was received. This report should describe the status of the project and the use of funds awarded and include an evaluation of the program or project. Submission of this report is required in order to be eligible for future support.

ADDENDUM:

**Williamstown Community Preschool
Application for Support of Non-Profit Organization**

Submitted January 2022

Background

Communities know, as *The Berkshire Eagle* stated in an editorial last year, that the child care crisis is “costly to properly address, but even more costly to ignore.” As has been the case for generations, working families need accessible care for their young children at a critical developmental juncture, and the centers who offer safe space and talented teachers to provide that care deserve a level of public investment that acknowledges this importance to the community.

Williamstown Community Preschool (WCP) has been proud to provide affordable, professional care for toddler, preschool, and school-age children ages 15 months to 8 years for decades (In fact, we have several current and recent students who are children of WCP alums!) WCP’s safe, caring environment helps local children learn, grow, and thrive by focusing on child-centered, child-directed activities. Our staff – many of whom have been with the preschool for decades – help children experience, explore, and gain an understanding of the world and the people around them. We give children a crucial foundation for success throughout the rest of their education—our kids learn how to cooperate, share, problem-solve and more.

At full capacity, WCP can accommodate 80 children in any given month (current enrollment is approximately 60.) Our services are essential to the town’s success: more than fifty percent of WCP’s families reside in Williamstown, and the majority of non-resident families include at least one parent/guardian working in Williamstown. We are proud to partner in this crucial endeavor and effectively serve the common good.

Continued Challenges

Happily, thanks to smart, dedicated leadership, WCP was able to weather the deep challenges posed by the pandemic including several months of closure without revenue. In the face of challenges, stress and complications that sometimes felt overwhelming, staff, students, and families worked together to prevail.

The challenges of operating an aging building are also upon us. In addition to a new roof (anticipated summer ‘23) our needs include new flooring throughout the building, critical repairs to historic exterior doors and windows, and significant repairs and restoration to the brick piers that form the basement of the church structure. These repairs are necessary to sustain a safe environment for our children.

Steps taken toward sustainability

WCP has worked diligently to move toward a sustainable operating model and find ways to save. We paused our food program during the pandemic and have chosen not to restart it which provides a substantial annual savings. On the other hand, we have increased staff compensation in recognition of our teachers' remarkable and important work and to remain competitive in this challenging hiring environment.

Current Challenges

After a pandemic low, enrollment has gradually increased and in the 2022-2023 academic year, we are slowly building back to full enrollment and staffing. We do face several enrollment challenges: Local public options for calendar year pre-K programs and summer school age programs have opened or expanded in recent years. This means decreased demand for WCP's pre-K classrooms and our summertime school age program. Additionally, possible expansion of our toddler program is limited by a state requirement that classrooms for our youngest students be on the first floor.

Staffing is a continuing challenge for WCP as it is for all childcare centers. Childcare is a difficult business model. Our teachers love what they do and consider their work a calling but also must maintain EEC licensure and engage in continuing education. As we look to the future, the increase in teacher salaries (to a level that appropriately recognizes them as professional educators) and control of fees for families are of paramount importance. But it's not something we can accomplish on our own.

We are also dealing with increased utility costs, afternoon snack prices, and educational supplies and materials. These costs have risen, while we have continued to maintain affordable care for the children in our community.

Financial Context

The WCP community is extremely grateful for the town's continued support. This past year we were able to significantly increase our staff salaries for a total of approximately \$50k. Put in place was a salary schedule that takes into account the education, licensure and tenure of teachers, and attempts to compensate them more in line with peer institutions.

For the past two years there have been concerns expressed about our strong balance sheet as it related to our need for town funding. Our balance sheet is even stronger this year thanks to an additional \$150k emergency SBA loan (amount borrowed now totals \$250k), as well as the continuation of temporary state funding through the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and the ERTC tax credit. When the EEC funding closes at the close of this fiscal year, we expect to return to operating at our prior razor-thin margins.

In the coming year we anticipate a steady and intentional reduction in our balance sheet. Our facilities committee has been hard at work identifying crucial projects, the first of which, our new roof, should commence in the summer of 2023, at a cost likely to exceed \$120k. Additional vital maintenance will quickly add up to hundreds of thousands of dollars of projects in our future. We need to reinforce our

structural columns in the church area of the basement. We have had to hire an engineering firm to guide us regarding what specifically needs to be fixed. This cost is upwards of \$14,000 before work is even done. We are painting the interior of the building and replacing an aging floor to help refresh our learning environments. We also need to repair the gym/former sanctuary space. In one of the classrooms, there is a drafty, plexiglass wall that needs to be sheetrocked and painted. On the exterior of the building, wooden window casings and large wooden doors need to be sanded and stained. The cement walkway to the preschool and the walkway to the church doors are in need of some repair, as well as the metal railing leading to the preschool. These are just some of the projects that need to be addressed with an aging building space.

Our Request and Rationale

For the coming fiscal year we are once again seeking a grant of \$50,000 from the town of Williamstown. These funds would allow us to continue to provide a crucial service to the town: high-quality childcare in a safe, up-to-date, educational environment.

As we stated last year, our board's goal was to shift resources to move the preschool towards a more sustainable business model. Under the exceptional leadership of Director Amy Tomkowicz we are well on our way to this sustainability but the reality of childcare economics means we can't operate on the professional level our students and community deserve without support above and beyond parent fees. This is the support we seek from the town.

Evaluating Impact

We evaluate WCP's success based on enrollment and retention. We were happy when state pandemic restrictions ended and we were able to return to full capacity. Accommodating as many families as state regulation permits is central to our mission and business model. WCP enrolls children from families qualifying for free or low-cost child care and accepts state vouchers. It has always been our policy to enroll students based on date of inquiry and not ability to pay.

To measure our success in marketing our services widely and responding to all inquiries in a timely manner, we monitor the number of inquiries as well as traffic to our website. If demand exceeds capacity, we maintain a waiting list for available spaces. This list sometimes numbers in the dozens across most programs depending on the time of year.

The Williamstown Community Preschool has provided affordable education and care for our community since 1972. We currently employ a staff of fourteen employees, twelve of which are full-time employees. Our staff members are dedicated to working closely with families to meet the needs of each individual child. There are two toddler classrooms, three preschool classrooms, and an off-site after school program. Throughout the year, our toddler room waitlist has been 6-8 for most of the year. Our toddler, early preschool, and school age inquiries have been steady.

Successful classroom experiences are evaluated through individual student progress. These are tracked

through daily interactions with our Brightwheel application and formal evaluations two times per year. The Brightwheel app also allows parents and teachers to communicate directly and regularly (through photos and texts). It is an invaluable resource for us, but it does come with a monthly cost.

Our formal written evaluations are based on Creative Curriculum which targets age-appropriate learning skills. Parents are encouraged to meet (by phone or in person when possible) with teachers to discuss their child's progress and goals. Action items that emerge from those conversations are addressed as quickly as possible. WCP's relationship with families is paramount to achieving the best outcomes for the children we serve.

Teachers document curriculum in relation to learning goals in each classroom and weekly lesson plans are posted on our Brightwheel application. Every other month, WCP's educational coordinator, along with the director, conducts written staff development for the teachers. In addition, teachers have at least twenty hours a year of professional development training to stay current with new education trends. Teachers are evaluated annually by the director, and the director is evaluated annually by the board of directors.

Williamstown Community Preschool is committed to fostering a better understanding of the needs of children within the community we serve. We will continue to improve the quality of care in the community by providing quality, affordable care, and education for children in a happy and safe environment.