



Walter Cerf Community Fund

Walter Cerf was born in Leipzig, Germany in 1907. The son of a successful businessman, he spent most of his youth in Berlin. He attended university in Freiburg, Heidelberg, and elsewhere before being awarded his Ph.D. from the University of Bonn in 1933. In 1937, he relocated to the United States and in 1941, he earned a second Ph.D. in philosophy at Princeton University. After becoming a United States citizen, he served in military intelligence with the 35th Infantry Division in Europe during World War II. For his service, he was awarded the Bronze Star. In 1947, he began a twenty-five year career as a Professor of Philosophy at Brooklyn College. He retired to his summer home in Leicester, Vermont in 1972.

Although his father's business, Gesellschaft für Eigentumsschutz, a night security agency, was expropriated by the Nazis in 1938, one-half of the company was returned to the family after World War II. In 1987, Mr. Cerf sold his interest in the company. During the last twenty years of his life, Walter Cerf made gifts exceeding \$10 million to more than 100 different organizations in Vermont. At his death in 2001, a permanent endowment, the Walter Cerf Community Fund, was established at the Vermont Community Foundation. The Fund makes grants annually in Walter's name and will continue the generosity of this remarkable man in perpetuity.

What We Fund

The Walter Cerf Community Fund (WCCF) makes grants to address charitable needs in the state of Vermont. Priority interests are the arts, education, historic preservation, and social services, reflecting the pattern of giving established by Mr. Cerf over many years. Within these issue areas, there is a strong desire to support work that addresses the needs of underserved populations. The WCCF prefers proposals that encourage cooperation, collaboration, and community building. We highly value the input of the Preservation Trust and strongly encourage grantseekers for historic preservation projects to consult with the Trust before submitting an application. The WCCF will rarely fund an entire project, but favors projects which have support from a variety of sources.

Grants are made to organizations that either have a statewide constituency and make a unique contribution to Vermont, or are located in Addison County or Brandon. Approximately 70% of funds available will be awarded to programs and projects in the Addison County/Brandon area; the remaining 30% of available funds will support statewide programs and projects.

[Click here to view a list of grants awarded in 2018.](#)

What We Don't Fund

In general, the WCCF will not make grants for endowments, religious purposes, individuals, or debt reduction. Operating support for \$5,000 or less may be provided on occasion, but will not normally be a priority for the WCCF. The larger \$25,000 grant is reserved for supporting an exceptional idea that will help bring an organization to a new level. Operating, endowment, and capital requests will not be considered for this size grant.

Grant Size

Grant awards will range from \$500 to \$5,000 for operating or project support. In addition, one grant of up to \$25,000 will be awarded in Addison County or Brandon to an organization with a great idea that has the potential to expand their current work in new and remarkable ways. Nonprofit organizations working in Addison County or Brandon may apply for the larger grant and/or for the smaller grant. If you are going to apply for both please submit two separate applications.

Who May Apply

Grant applications will be accepted from organizations that are located in or serve the people of Vermont. Organizations must be tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or be a public agency, school, or municipality in the state of Vermont. Nonprofit organizations or community groups who do not have 501(c)(3) status may apply for grant awards if another eligible organization acts as a fiscal sponsor.

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity (as defined in paragraph 249(c)(4) of title 18, United States Code), sexual orientation, marital or parental status, political affiliation, military service, physical or mental ability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity funded in whole or in part with funds made available (meaning any funds having a competitive application process) by the Vermont Community Foundation, and any other program or activity funded in whole or in part with funds appropriated for grants, cooperative agreements, and other assistance administered by the Foundation.

Grant applicants must employ staff and provide services without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity (as defined in paragraph 249(c)(4) of title 18, United States Code), sexual orientation, marital or parental status, political affiliation, military service, physical or mental ability.

Deadline and Notification

Applications must be submitted electronically by **5:00 p.m. on June 7, 2019** using our Online Grants Manager. No late applications will be accepted.

Applicants will be notified of the results of their application by the end of August.

Application Process

Visit our [Online Grants Center](#) to learn how to use the Grants Manager, including logging your existing account or registering for the first time. Available application forms are accessed after logging in.

To help you prepare, [click here to preview the application questions](#).

APPLY FOR A GRANT