

**THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF FREDERICK COUNTY**  
**The Women's Giving Circle of Frederick County**

**Bylaws**

**1. PURPOSE AND MISSION**

The Women's Giving Circle of Frederick County (Circle), founded in 2005, brings donors together who share common philanthropic goals that benefit women in need and their dependents.

The Circle's mission, through a component fund of The Community Foundation of Frederick County entitled The Women's Giving Circle of Frederick County Fund, provides opportunities for donors to promote and support programs that enable and empower women in challenging situations to improve the quality of their lives and the lives of those for whom they are responsible.

**2. GOALS OF THE WOMEN'S GIVING CIRCLE**

In support of its mission, the Circle goals are as follows:

- A. Expand philanthropic and leadership opportunities that encourage and increase giving by local women
- B. Contribute toward the improvement of the emotional, educational, financial and physical well being of women of all ages who are in challenging or dangerous situations
- C. Create a community of philanthropic awareness of the needs of women
- D. Create an ongoing flexible fund for current grants, while also creating a permanent fund as a growing, evolving legacy
- E. Award grants based on specific criteria established by the Circle
- F. Aid women with immediate needs by providing funds for emergencies and short-term requirements to selected organizations that provide appropriate assistance
- G. Provide for the Circle's future by continuing to engage new contributors and attracting legacy members
- H. Teach subsequent generations about philanthropy and bring youth into Circle Programs
- I. Solicit grants from other local, regional, national and international sources
- J. Invite interested men to donate to and participate in Circle efforts
- K. Remain flexible to alter/modify the Circle's course appropriately for continued success

**3. SPONSORING ORGANIZATION**

The Circle is a participating membership entity that has established quasi-endowment and pass through funds with The Community Foundation of Frederick County (Community Foundation).

**4. OPERATING POLICIES**

The Circle's funds shall operate under the policies established by the Community Foundation's Board of Trustees for quasi-endowment and pass through funds.

Unless otherwise designated by the donor, each contribution given to the Circle shall be divided so that 20 percent will be placed into the quasi-endowment fund and 80 percent will be placed into the

pass through fund. Donors may request that their contribution be placed into the funds in different allocations. In the absence of direction, a donor's gift will be divided as noted above.

The proceeds from the Circle's funds will be distributed as recommended by the Circle Grants Committee and approved by the membership.

## 5. NAME

The Women's Giving Circle of Frederick County is the official name of the organization.

## 6. MEMBERSHIP

- A. Membership shall be open to all people, regardless of gender, who wish to further the mission and goals of the Circle through financial support and participation. Entities (including but not limited to companies and organizations) may make contributions and become non-voting members.
- B. To join the Circle, members agree to pledge a minimum of \$3,000, generally payable over three years at \$1,000 per year. An exception for the general payment period is made for those making their initial pledges before age 35; they may fulfill their pledge by making annual payments of \$500 per year for up to six years. Continuing contributions are encouraged after initial commitments are fulfilled.
- C. To encourage and facilitate the growth and longevity of the organization, junior memberships will be available to individuals under the age of 22 who make a minimum one-time contribution of \$500. If individuals with junior memberships wish to convert those memberships into Circle membership, they may use the \$500 as a credit toward their membership if the pledge is made prior to the members turning age 25.
- D. Donors will be recognized at cumulative levels as set forth below. In-kind contributions will not be accepted towards membership but will be accepted as sponsorships.
- E. Donors who achieve cumulative levels of giving will be recognized as follows:
  - Red Diamond Members who donate/pledge \$20,000 or above
  - Pink Diamond Members who donate/pledge \$10,000-\$19,999
  - Diamond: Members who donate/pledge \$5,000 - \$9,999
  - Emerald: Members who donate/pledge \$3,001- \$4,999
  - Sapphire: Members who donate/pledge \$3,000
- F. Members will:
  - Vote on matters submitted by the Leadership Circle via electronic media, conventional USPS mail or at the Annual Meeting
  - Participate in the Circle's work by giving advice, suggestions, and direction as requested by the **Leadership Circle**
  - Attend the Annual Meeting to receive and review reports of the year's work

- Have access to financial, membership, and organizational information through the official Womens Giving Circle website – [www.frederickwgc.org](http://www.frederickwgc.org)
  - Encourage participation of individuals and entities that support the mission and goals of the Circle
  - Honor financial commitments made to the Circle's fund
- G. Benefits of membership include:
- Participation in an organization that empowers women
  - Input in the organization's annual goals and grant criteria
  - Invitation to the Circle's annual meeting and other special programs
  - Networking opportunities with people with shared values
  - Eligibility for membership in the Leadership Circle and standing committees of the Circle

## **7. GOVERNANCE**

The Circle is governed by the Leadership Circle, consisting of the officers, immediate past Chair, and committee chairs, which is responsible for the Circle's management and operations. The Circle's founder shall also serve as Chair Emeritus and will serve on the Leadership Circle

The immediate past Chair and the Chair Emeritus are ex officio members of the Leadership Circle, but have voting privileges the same as all other members of the Leadership Circle. The immediate past Chair and Chair Emeritus' role in the Leadership Circle is to provide continuity, historical memory, and guidance to the officers and committee chairs, but these two positions do not have specific tasks, unless assigned by the Chair.

## **8. OFFICERS**

The Circle officers are as follows:

- A. Chair
- Leads the Circle in all activities
  - Supervises the Circle's general business
  - Sets Leadership Circle meeting dates
  - Chairs Leadership Circle meetings, annual meetings and regular membership meetings
  - Creates agendas for Leadership Circle meetings
  - Appoints committee chairs
  - Works with and provides leadership to the committee chairs in fulfilling their responsibilities
- B. Vice Chair
- Provides leadership to the Circle in the absence of the Chair
  - Prepares to fill the responsibilities of the Chair as a part of an organized succession plan
  - Fulfills responsibilities as assigned by the Chair

C. Financial Chair

- Oversees finance and cash flow of the organization
- Creates a budget for operating expenses, which is presented to the Community Foundation Board of Trustees for its approval
- Meets quarterly with the Community Foundation to review member commitments, giving levels and invoicing
- Liaises with the Community Foundation regarding donations, grants and expenses as needed
- Fulfills responsibilities as assigned by the Chair

Officers will serve two-year terms with a maximum of three consecutive terms. Terms will coincide with the Community Foundation's fiscal year, which ends June 30<sup>th</sup>.

**9. NOMINATION, ELECTION AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS**

The Chair will appoint a Nominating Committee biannually in the spring to recruit and present a slate of officers, either via USPS or electronic means, to the membership no less than fourteen (14) days prior to the Annual Meeting. The approval of the slate will take place at the Annual Meeting and approval will be by majority of Annual Meeting attendees.

**10. COMMITTEES**

Each committee chair is recruited and appointed by the Circle Chair. The committee responsibilities are listed below.

- A. Membership: The Membership Committee is responsible for the recruitment, retention, and orientation of members.
- B. Communications: The Communications Committee is responsible for external communications that promote Circle programs and activities by way of media relations, promotional materials, the Circle website and image building.
- C. Program: The Program Committee is responsible for educational programs as a part of each regular membership meeting that broaden the membership's awareness of current trends and the emotional, educational, financial and physical well being of women of all ages and those who depend upon them who are in challenging or dangerous situations within Frederick County. The committee is also responsible for obtaining financial sponsorship of each Circle general meeting and Annual Meeting.
- D. Grants: The Grants Committee is responsible for designing and implementing the grantsmaking process. Annually, the Committee will oversee the process by which grants will be awarded up to the maximum available amount. The maximum amount available for distribution is 5 percent of the permanent fund and the entire amount of the pass-through fund, both as determined as of December 31 each year. The Committee determines eligibility criteria, timeline, and the grant evaluation

process. The Committee will solicit proposals from organizations that work to benefit women and their dependents in Frederick County, Maryland. The Grants Committee will review grant proposals and make initial recommendations for grants to the membership for review and comment. Presentation to the general membership can be through multiple media, to include paper and or electronic documents. After receiving comments from the general membership, the Grants Committee will present the slate of grants to the general membership for approval. Each member will be allowed one vote either for or against the awards in aggregate; a majority of the membership is required to approve the grants as presented. Upon approval, the Grants committee will present the membership's recommendations to the Community Foundation Board of Trustees for final approval.

- E. Community Outreach: The Community Outreach Committee liaises with community groups that would like to interact with the membership or provide fundraising activities to support the Circle's funds. The Community Outreach Committee will develop policies that the Leadership Circle shall approve regarding appropriate activities in which to ask members to participate or fundraisers that would be associated with the Circle.
- F. Development: The Development Committee is responsible for identifying opportunities for continuing giving by members who have completed their initial Pledge. The Development Committee will develop policies to encourage such giving and will work with the other standing committees to encourage the longevity of the Circle.

## **11. COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEES**

Committee chairs are responsible for recruiting members for their respective committees. Most committees will have between 3 and 5 members, depending on the work at hand. Committee chairs are responsible for recruiting members who would become familiar with the committee's work to enable leadership succession.

## **12. ANNUAL MEETING**

The Annual Meeting shall be held in May or June of each year to elect officers for the subsequent term, present grants, review accomplishments, honor members, and update members on the Circle's activities of the past year, and to announce goals for the upcoming year. Guests and community leaders are welcome by invitation.

## **13. BYLAW CHANGES**

Bylaw changes may be made with the approval of the Leadership Circle and the Community Foundation.