

Request for Proposals – Contract Grants Manager

Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra

October 2024

Background

Music Director Andrew Sewell and the musicians of the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra (WCO) bring world-class music to more than 250,000 music lovers annually. Founded in 1960, the WCO is one of Madison's gems, a national-caliber chamber orchestra behind the now four-decade summer tradition of Concerts on the Square. No other arts organization in Wisconsin performs free for more people each year.

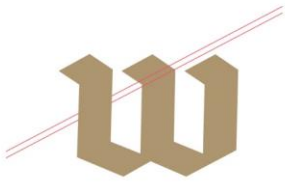
The WCO also presents the classical Masterworks Series at Overture Center for the Arts, annually sold-out holiday performances of *Messiah*, and the backing orchestral score of Madison Ballet's *Nutcracker*. Additionally, the WCO operates multiple music education programs for families and children with wide-ranging musical backgrounds and abilities. The WCO is currently in the midst of a five-year recording project called Musical Landscapes in Color, bringing to the fore orchestral works exclusively by living, contemporary composers representing diverse backgrounds. While headquartered in Madison, the orchestra continues to expand its footprint around the state. To learn more about the WCO, visit wcoconcerts.org.

Current state of the WCO's grant funding: over the past three years, the WCO's Director of Development and CEO have managed a portfolio of 10–15 grants each year, ranging from \$1,000–25,000. The WCO has done an adequate job of maintaining annual grant funding and organizing current and new activities. The annual budget of the WCO is \$3MM, and currently, \$50,000 comes from grants.

However, the WCO believes, with the right third party support for grants management, revenue from grants can increase \$50,000–100,000 annually over the next couple of fiscal years. The in-house Development team needs to spend more time cultivating major individual givers to expand philanthropic support. Growing revenue from grant-based sources is essential for the WCO's growth and sustainability in the coming years.

Term, Schedule, Portfolio, Compensation

- Term: beginning in approximately late November 2024, with a contract to last one year, with opportunity for renewal.
- Scope of Services: see next section
- Schedule: the grant writer will touch base at least twice a month formally with the WCO Development team to discuss current and future opportunities, with additional meetings as needed. Regular meeting times will be determined by both parties. We anticipate the chosen contract Grants Manager will have between 12–15 hours per month of work, on average.
- The WCO's current grant portfolio comprises around 15 secured grants annually, with a target to secure 5–7 new grant funding sources in the period of this contract. Current grants received are valued at around \$1,000–50,000 each. New opportunities should be focused on \$15,000+ grants.
- Compensation: the WCO has \$8,000–10,000 budget for grant-writing support in our fiscal year 2025 (Sep–Aug).



Scope of Services

- Provide general grants management services to draft, finalize, and submit grant applications.
- Manage the current and prospective portfolio of grants, including tracking timelines, deliverables, and grantee information.
- Coordinate contributions of WCO staff to the grant writing process, including draft writing, budgets, support materials, and application submissions.
- Research and identify new potential grant funding sources.
- Continually develop and maintain an understanding of the WCO's programs and services, as well as the WCO's unique value proposition and organizational voice.
- Assist with reporting for secured grants, including narrative drafting.

Requirements for Responding

- A summary of how you would approach managing the WCO's grant portfolio in 2024–25, including writing, prospecting, collaborating with WCO staff, administration and tracking, and follow-up
- A summary of your success in working internally or externally as a grant writer
- A budget for one year of your services including all proposed fees and expenses. We prefer a high degree of budget certainty, but realize some scope and fee adjustments could be made by mutual agreement by both parties.
- A listing of (2) client or employer references that can speak to your grants management successes and performance as an colleague/employee
- (2) writing samples, preferably from a grant submission (as attachments)

Please keep your response to no more than (3) pages and attach your (2) writing samples.

For your reference, please view these supplemental materials: 1) [summary of WCO FY24 grants, budget, and strategic plan](#); 2) [List of WCO grant applications FY23–24](#).

Schedule

Proposals need to be emailed to Elliott Valentine, Director of Development, at elliottvalentine@wcoconcerts.org by Monday Oct. 28.

We look forward to working with a contract Grants Manager to support the fundraising efforts of the WCO, fueling the artistic impact of the orchestra. Thank you in advance for your time and attention.

Thank you!

Elliott Valentine

Director of Development, Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra