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## BUSINESS COURIER

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# Greater Cincinnati Foundation plants funding seeds

Business Courier of Cincinnati - by [Dan Monk](#) Senior Staff Reporter

The **Greater Cincinnati Foundation** is priming the pump for local stimulus awards by helping area nonprofits chase federal grant dollars.

"We're doing everything we can," said Ellen Gilligan, vice president for community involvement at GCF, a community foundation with \$368 million in assets at the end of 2008.

The foundation is a clearinghouse for philanthropic initiatives, helping family and corporate foundations evaluate grant requests and manage their money. The \$787 billion stimulus bill created dozens of funding opportunities in which grants will be awarded on a competitive basis. Some of the decisions will be made by federal agencies; other awards will come from state departments that have stimulus money to spend.

As Tri-State agencies evaluated their options, GCF stepped in with seed money to pay for grant-writing services and organizational help that led to collaborative grant proposals. If all of the grant proposals work out as hoped, organizations will receive more than \$15 million in stimulus funding to fuel their efforts.

"We wanted our organizations to have as much of an opportunity as anyone else," said Ray Watson, a senior program officer for GCF.

### 'Weathering the storm'

Watson helps administer the "Weathering the Storm" fund, a \$2 million pool aimed at providing short-term help for people impacted by the economy. GCF started the fund in March by allocating \$1 million to the cause. In June, organizers set aside \$40,000 that nonprofits can use to hire grant-writing consultants to help them chase even larger awards.

In August, GCF announced 16 grants to nonprofits that are trying to raise \$10.9 million from various stimulus programs.

"None of these are shots in the dark," said Watson. "They're all organizations that have succeeded in state or federal grant programs."

### Jobs program seeks funds

Another GCF initiative could yield \$5 million in grants for workforce development programs. That effort involves the formation of collaborative grant proposals through the **Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network**, a regional organization which helps low-wage workers find work in economic sectors that are expected to grow in Cincinnati.

Janice Urbanik runs the network's construction-industry program. She has helped various groups apply for three separate grants that would prepare low-income workers for building-trades apprentice programs and green jobs – which include energy-efficiency audits, weatherization repairs, heating and air conditioning upgrades and installation of solar, wind and geothermal units.

"We're trying to forge collaborations for these grant applications to increase our chances," she said.

One example involves a joint application through the national office of the **Local Initiatives Support Corp.**

The community-building group wants an \$8 million grant to provide targeted job-training services in several U.S. cities. It invited communities all over the country to submit proposals. A dozen LISC sites submitted proposals; seven were chosen for an application that LISC will submit to the **U.S. Department of Labor** at the end of this month.

"Cincinnati and Indianapolis were deemed to have the best project submission and will be awarded \$1.2 million each," if LISC's national application is successful, said Gilligan.

The Workforce Network is also seeking a \$3 million grant to prepare workers for jobs in energy-related construction fields. And it's seeking a \$500,000 state grant through the "Construction Futures" program, operated by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. This would provide counseling and educational services to prepare candidates for union apprentice programs.

### Writing for Dollars

These organizations received a combined \$40,000 to hire grant writers to help them seek federal stimulus grants. The Greater Cincinnati Foundation administered the search process through its "Weathering the Storm" fund:

- [Child Focus](#)
- [Lighthouse Youth Services](#)

- [Mill Creek Restoration Project](#)
- **[Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission.](#)**
- [Salvation Army](#)
- [Winton Hills Medical and Health Center](#)
- [YWCA of Greater Cincinnati](#)
- [Abuse and Rape Crisis Shelter of Warren County](#)
- [Art Links](#)
- [Cincinnati Shakespeare Co.](#)
- [Children Inc.](#)
- [Center for Environmental Education](#)
- **[Hearing Speech and Deaf Center](#)**
- [Parachute of Butler County](#)
- [SARA-IRP](#)
- [Transitions Inc. of Northern Kentucky](#)

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