

2026 WOMEN UNITED GRANT APPLICATION FORM

Organization Information

Organization Name

Girls on the Run Lancaster-Lebanon

EIN

27-0200927

Project Name

Women Leading Well

Address

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Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17601
United States

Contact Name

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Executive Director / President (If different)

Jennifer West

Eligibility Criteria

Is your organization a registered nonprofit organization with an official letter of determination of 501c3 status from the Internal Revenue Service?

Yes

Has your organization operated in Lancaster County for at least one year (operating in Lancaster before July 1, 2025)?

Yes

Does your organization or program you are requesting funding for in this application serve primarily women and/ or teen girls?

Yes

Does your organization provide services to families at or below the ALICE threshold in Lancaster County?

Yes

Is your organization delinquent on any state or federal debt?

No

Does your organization share United Way's view of collaborative and inclusive service to the entire community, without excluding anyone on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, ethnicity, national

origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other factor not relevant to a person's eligibility for service or ability to contribute?

Yes

Has your organization update your listing with PA 211 in the last 12 months?

Yes

Application Elements

Executive Summary

Girls on the Run (GOTR) Lancaster-Lebanon requests \$20,000 to support Women Leading Well, an initiative strengthening the health, safety, and wellbeing of the women who mentor and lead girls across Lancaster County. Each year, 500+ women volunteer as GOTR coaches, role models, and trusted leaders in the lives of young girls. While these women dedicate their time to supporting others, they often have limited opportunities to prioritize their own health and wellbeing.

This program expands training and wellness opportunities, equipping volunteers with life-saving safety skills, peer networks, and mental health resources. Through certifications, a mentorship program, and a Wellness and Leadership Retreat, GOTR creates vital spaces for women to grow. This investment strengthens not only the coaches, but the girls and communities they lead, aligning with 2026 women's health and safety priorities.

Organization Description

Girls on the Run (GOTR) Lancaster-Lebanon is a nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring girls to be joyful, healthy, and confident using a fun, experience-based curriculum that creatively integrates running. As part of the GOTR International network, our local council, which was established in 2009, delivers this evidence-based afterschool programming for girls in grades 3-8 in every district across Lancaster and Lebanon Counties.

Our 10-week program blends physical activity with social-emotional learning to help girls build confidence, develop healthy relationships, and strengthen skills such as goal setting, decision-making, and emotional resilience. At a critical stage of development, participants gain tools to navigate peer pressure, manage stress, and build lifelong habits that support both physical and mental health. Each season concludes with a celebratory community 5K that reinforces perseverance, goal achievement, and the power of community encouragement.

GOTR partners with schools, community organizations, and hundreds of trained volunteer coaches to deliver programming throughout the region. Through a sliding-scale fee structure and a robust financial assistance program, we remove financial barriers so all girls, regardless of income or background, can access opportunities to grow, move, and thrive.

Commitment to Equity

Each year our council serves approximately 1,800 Lancaster and Lebanon girls (37% BIPOC) in grades 3-8 and 500+ women mentors (ages 14-76), representing the region's racial and socioeconomic diversity. Our GOTR community includes families in Title I schools and neighborhoods facing significant financial barriers; 72% of participants require financial assistance. We specifically support the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) population through a "pay-what-you-can" sliding-scale fee structure. Bilingual outreach ensures universal accessibility.

We are committed to a leadership model mirroring our community, with 13% of our coaches identifying as BIPOC. Recognizing that time and accessibility are primary hurdles to volunteering; we provide leadership stipends for logistical needs like childcare and travel. This ensures GOTR leadership is an accessible opportunity for all women, regardless of economic circumstances.

Serving these specific populations is essential to our goals; true community wellness cannot exist while health and leadership gaps persist along racial and economic lines. By investing in these women, we address disparities highlighted in the Lancaster County Racial Equity Profile, regarding gaps in access to extracurricular enrichment and

health-promoting physical activity. The Women Leading Well initiative advances equity by providing mentors with the wellness resources and leadership training necessary to sustain their roles as trusted leaders for the next generation.

Proposal Details

Main Priority Area

Women's and/ or Teen's Health

Grant Dollar Amount Requested

\$20,000.00

What percent of the overall project budget is covered by the Women United grant?

36

Will this program/project start or continue to operate if you do not receive 100% of the funding requested?

Yes

Project Description

Why: Addressing the Wellness Gap

Our Women Leading Well initiative addresses the physical health, preventative wellness, emotional wellbeing, and leadership development of adult women and teen volunteers across Lancaster County. While our 500+ adult coaches and approximately 60 high school junior coaches (97% women) are the backbone of our programming, many of those in the ALICE population serve as the primary support system for girls in high-poverty neighborhoods and experience high rates of burnout and secondary trauma. The Lancaster County Racial Equity Profile highlights significant gaps in access to preventative health care and wellness spaces for women of color. Without dedicated support, these vital community leaders face mental health strain that impacts their ability to lead effectively.

What We Will Do: A Holistic Support Ecosystem

We are proposing a comprehensive health and leadership initiative designed to improve the physical and emotional wellbeing of our 500+ volunteer coaches. This initiative includes both the expansion of proven models and the launch of new, high-impact interventions:

- * National Coach Training (Existing/Strengthen): We will deliver 8 hours of intensive training for new coaches and 1.5 hours for returning coaches (adults and teens), focusing on trauma-informed care and social-emotional learning.
- * Women's Wellness & Leadership Retreat (New): A dedicated day focused on mental health resilience, stress management, and physical wellness, providing a rare space for mentors to prioritize their own care.
- * Peer Mentorship Program (New): A structured network connecting new coaches with experienced coaches will foster a supportive social network, reduce isolation, and build confidence in leadership.
- * "GOTR for Grown-Ups" (Expanded): low-barrier, local workshops on nutrition, movement, and self-care.

How: Removing Barriers to Equity:

To ensure this initiative is truly accessible to the women who need it most, we will execute through four strategic pillars:

- * Provide Professional Certification: We deliver tangible, "resume-ready" skills including CPR/First Aid certification, bias-minimization training, and conflict resolution, which empowers women both within GOTR and in their professional lives.
- * Cultivate Expert Partnerships: We will collaborate with local healthcare systems and wellness practitioners to facilitate evidence-based workshops, ensuring our mentors receive high-quality, professional care at no cost to participants.
- * Ensure Linguistic Equity: The GOTR curriculum, training manuals, and retreat materials will be provided in Spanish to fully support our diverse, bilingual coach base.
- * Logistical support: We provide leadership stipends to remove logistical barriers like transportation and childcare,

ensuring women from all socioeconomic backgrounds can volunteer with GOTR.

Measurable Training: GOTR has a nationally recognized coach training program that includes (not limited to) CPR and First Aid certification, trauma informed training, developing leadership styles, minimizing our own biases and recognizing microaggressions, and facilitating conversations. Our trainings empower women with tangible skills to care for themselves, and the girls and communities they serve. By investing in the health of these mentors, we ensure a sustainable, healthy leadership pipeline that directly benefits the 1,800+ girls in our program each year.

Collaboration

Our council collaborates with several local healthcare providers, wellness organizations, and community businesses to support this initiative. We have established partnerships with Aetna, Penn Medicine, Penn State Health, WellSpan Health, and UPMC all of whom share our commitment to women's health in Lancaster County. These partners will provide on-site wellness screenings, educational materials, and workshop facilitation during our retreat and community events.

For the Women's Wellness and Leadership Retreat, we will also partner with local wellness professionals and small businesses to provide workshops, educational resources, and services focused on holistic health. This may include physical therapists, nutritionists, mental health counselors, fitness instructors, yoga and Pilates studios, massage therapists, meditation and mindfulness practitioners, and women's health specialists. These partners provide expertise on topics such as injury prevention, stress management, healthy movement, and overall wellbeing.

By bringing these experts directly to our volunteers, we remove the financial and navigational barriers that can prevent women from accessing specialized care. This collaborative approach ensures that the Women Leading Well initiative is not just an event, but a gateway to a permanent network of health support. By engaging both large healthcare systems and community-based practitioners, we provide a comprehensive safety net that promotes long-term physical and emotional wellbeing for our mentors.

Implementation Plan

Girls on the Run (GOTR) Lancaster-Lebanon will implement the Women Leading Well initiative during the 2026-2027 program year (Fall 2026 and Spring 2027) through coordinated activities integrated into the organization's seasonal programming model. The following implementation steps outline how GOTR will carry out coach training, mentorship, community engagement, and wellness programming to support the physical health, emotional wellbeing, and leadership development of adult women volunteers and teen leaders across Lancaster County.

National Coach Training & Certification (Aug-Sept 2026; Feb-Mar 2027) - \$4,300

At the start of each GOTR season, volunteer coaches will participate in the organization's established coach training program. GOTR conducts approximately 3-6 training sessions each season, preparing more than 500 volunteer coaches annually.

These sessions will be coordinated by the Girls on the Run team in partnership with certified instructors to deliver training that equips volunteers to lead safe, supportive, and effective team environments while promoting safety preparedness and preventative health practices.

Training activities will include:

- * CPR and First Aid certification led by certified instructors
- * Curriculum walkthroughs to prepare coaches to lead lessons focused on confidence, healthy habits, and teamwork
- * Scenario-based discussions addressing trauma-informed and inclusive coaching practices that support mental health and emotional wellbeing
- * Safety and risk management exercises to prepare coaches to respond to potential emergencies during practices
- * Peer discussion and reflection activities that allow volunteers to share experiences and build relationships with other women coaches

These trainings ensure that coaches are prepared to support participants while also equipping themselves with life-

saving skills, safety awareness, and leadership tools they can apply in their workplaces, families, and communities.

Women's Wellness and Leadership Retreat (Culminating Event – May/June 2027) - \$10,950

The initiative will culminate in a Women's Wellness and Leadership Retreat that brings together volunteer coaches, mentors, and junior coaches for a day focused on personal wellness, connection, and leadership development.

Girls on the Run staff will coordinate the retreat in partnership with local healthcare providers, fitness professionals, and wellness practitioners who will lead educational and interactive sessions throughout the event.

Retreat activities may include:

- * Movement sessions such as yoga, stretching, or guided walks that promote physical activity and stress reduction
- * Stress management and mindfulness workshops led by mental health professionals
- * Injury prevention and recovery education led by physical therapists
- * Nutrition education and healthy lifestyle discussions led by wellness practitioners
- * Small group reflection and peer discussion sessions that encourage connection among women leaders
- * Health screenings such as blood pressure checks, blood glucose tests, heart rate monitoring, etc.

The retreat will also include healthy food options and opportunities to connect with local wellness partners, such as fitness studios, preventative health providers, and wellness practitioners who can support participants in maintaining healthy habits beyond the event.

The event will conclude with the presentation of the Coach of the Year Award, recognizing outstanding women leaders who demonstrate exceptional mentorship, leadership, and commitment to community wellbeing.

Peer Mentorship Program (Year-Round/Seasonal) - \$3,250

Girls on the Run will launch a Peer Mentorship Program to support new volunteer coaches and strengthen the network of women leaders involved in the program.

Staff will begin by conducting targeted outreach to former coaches, long-time volunteers, and community ambassadors who have previously coached teams. Interested mentors will complete a short survey describing their coaching experience, leadership style, availability, and areas of interest. New coaches will complete a similar onboarding survey during the coach registration process. Staff will then match mentors and mentees based on factors such as coaching experience, life stage, availability, geography, and shared interests.

Mentor engagement will include:

- * Regular check-in conversations throughout the season
- * Problem-solving discussions related to coaching challenges
- * Sharing strategies for leading curriculum lessons and supporting participants
- * Attending practices when possible or connecting virtually to provide encouragement and guidance
- * Mentorship check-in logs will be gathered and maintained by staff to track the frequency and quality of peer connections

By creating trusted peer support relationships, the mentorship program promotes emotional wellbeing, confidence, and stress reduction for women volunteers, while building a stronger network of women leaders within the community. Mentors will receive \$250 per adult mentee to recognize the time and leadership they contribute to supporting new volunteers.

GOTR for Grown-Ups Engagement Events (Year-Round, As Opportunities Arise) - \$1,000

Girls on the Run will host GOTR for Grown-Ups engagement events to encourage adult women including parents, caregivers, coaches, and professionals to engage with the same social-emotional learning themes explored in the Girls on the Run curriculum.

Staff and trained volunteers will organize informal pop-up gatherings and lunch-and-learn style sessions hosted at community spaces, partner locations, or program sites.

Implementation activities will include:

- * Scheduling small-group lunch-and-learn gatherings facilitated by staff or trained volunteers
- * Hosting pop-up discussion sessions during the program season at accessible community locations
- * Introducing participants to themes such as emotional regulation, healthy relationships, goal setting, and resilience
- * Facilitating guided discussions and light physical activity using prompts from the GOTR for Grown-Ups resources
- * Translation Services for all areas of Women Leading Well - \$500

These gatherings create welcoming spaces where women can explore strategies that support mental health, emotional resilience, physical activity, and healthy lifestyle practices while building supportive relationships with others in their community.

Outcomes & Evaluation

Specific Outcomes & Goals GOTR will launch the Women Leading Well initiative to strengthen health, safety, and leadership for 500+ volunteer coaches. We aim to:

- * Equip mentors with life-saving emergency response skills.
- * Establish a peer-mentorship network to reduce volunteer burnout.
- * Bridge the wellness gap through preventative health resources and leadership training.

Tangible/Measurable Outcomes (2026–2027):

- * Emergency Readiness: At least 100 coaches will obtain CPR and First Aid certification.
- * Support Infrastructure: Recruitment of 3-5 experienced mentors to support 10-15 new coaches through a structured pilot program.
- * Leadership Growth: At least 75% of coaches will demonstrate increased wellness literacy and leadership confidence via standardized pre- and post-assessments.
- * Preventative Care: 200+ women will receive direct health screenings and education through a dedicated Wellness and Leadership Retreat.

Impact: When women volunteers feel confident and physically supported, they model healthy behaviors and emotional resilience for the 1,800+ girls they serve. By providing mentors with strategies for stress management and healthy movement, we create a "ripple effect." These women and teens apply their new leadership skills and wellness habits within their own households, workplaces, and schools, fostering stronger mentorship and more health-conscious families across Lancaster and Lebanon counties.

Program Evaluation and Metrics GOTR will utilize a robust evaluation framework to measure the reach and efficacy of the Women Leading Well initiative including:

- * Quantitative Outputs: Training 500+ volunteers across 3-6 sessions, hosting 2-4 workshops, and executing a large-scale Wellness Retreat with 4-6 healthcare partners.
- * Qualitative Outcomes: Targeting 75% increased confidence in wellness knowledge and 70% reduction in volunteer stress.

Methodology: To ensure linguistic equity, digital pre- and post-surveys are provided in English and Spanish. We maintain mentorship logs and will conduct qualitative focus groups after the Spring 2027 season. This blend of data and storytelling ensures a comprehensive view of the initiative's success and informs future scaling.

Documents

Required Documents

- [GOTR-FY26-BOD-Roster-2.pdf](#)

- [GOTR-Financial-Summary-2024-2025.pdf](#)
- [Final-United-Way-of-Lancaster-Overall-and-Project-Budget-2.xlsx](#)
- [IRS-Determination-Letter.pdf](#)