

# Community Improvement Program Award

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## CONTEST PRINCIPLES

GFWC's Community Improvement Program Award (formerly the Community Improvement Contest) aims to enhance the lives of GFWC's neighbors around the world by meeting community specific needs, and elevating our clubs' status within those communities. The Community Improvement Program Award is the heart and soul of GFWC. The Community Improvement Program Award is our longest standing project. It provides a club with the opportunity to development the leadership skills of its members, increase membership, and promote community awareness of the club's activities. It aims to meet the needs of individual communities. The Community Improvement Program Award provides a vision for the future of the relationships between clubs and their communities.

## RECOMMENDED CONTEST IDEAS

The Community Improvement Program Award does not lend itself to recommendations for project ideas because the project should be specific to the club's community. However, there are a few things to consider in participating in the Community Improvement Program Award.

- Every club is capable of creating a Community Improvement project.
- Almost any project can be turned into a Community Improvement project.
- These projects should address a specific need within the community.
- Club should establish partnerships within the community to address the community's need.
- Partnering with the community provides our members with leadership skills and allows GFWC to establish itself within the community.
- Clubs can partner with local organizations and GFWC's national partners.
  - Professional or other membership organizations
  - Governmental organizations
  - Other nonprofit organizations

You are encouraged to consider your Community Improvement Project as an ongoing community effort that lasts as long as the community need remains.

*For more information on how you can create a fundraising program to assist in seeking donations and assistance to support your Community Improvement project, review the GFWC Fundraising Advancement Guide in the GFWC Club Manual.*

*For more information on how you can help your club evaluate how it can best use its resources to meet a community need and for information on project planning, please review the GFWC Leadership Advancement Guide in the GFWC Club Manual, which includes information on conducting a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) and sample project plans and strategic plan templates that may assist you in measuring your achievements*

*For more information on how you can use your Community Improvement project planning to retain and recruit members, review the GFWC Membership Advancement Guide in the GFWC Club Manual.*

*For more information on useful tools for working with external audiences, please review the GFWC Public Affairs Advancement Guide in the GFWC Club Manual, which includes information on public relations strategies, sample club press releases, and instructions on how to create a communications plan.*

*For more information on how you can access information about and inspiration from previous Community Improvement Program Award winners, review the GFWC Women's History and Resource Center Advancement Guide in the GFWC Club Manual.*

## HOW TO ENTER

- Review and adhere to all criteria and deadline outlined.
- Reference the Advancement Guides (Fundraising, Leadership, Membership, Public Affairs, and the Women's History and Resource Center) in the *GFWC Club Manual*, which is also available at [www.GFWC.org/ClubManual](http://www.GFWC.org/ClubManual), and/or the publication *Programming with a Purpose*, available at [www.GFWC.org/GFWCMembers](http://www.GFWC.org/GFWCMembers).
- Complete the official GFWC Community Improvement Program Award Form.
- Attach a narrative and accompanying materials if desired.

## CONTEST RULES

- The project book must not exceed seven pounds, nor measure more than 15 x 20 inches.
- This project covers the period March 1, 2010, to February 28, 2012.
- Club entries must be sent to your state's GFWC Community Improvement Program Award chairmen, postmarked by March 10, 2012.

### *State Contest Rules*

- Rules are determined by your state federation.
- Club entries must be sent to your state's GFWC Community Improvement Program Award chairmen, postmarked by March 10, 2012.

### *National Contest Rules*

Each state's first-place entry must be postmarked by April 1, 2012, and sent to:

Community Improvement Program Award  
GFWC  
1734 N Street NW  
Washington, DC 20036-2990.

## CLARIFICATIONS AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Entries forwarded to GFWC become the property of GFWC and will not be returned. Winning entries will be housed in the GFWC Women's History and Resource Center.
- Judges of Community Improvement Contest Award submissions on the state and national level may not be members of GFWC.
- All monetary awards must be used to further community improvement initiative.

### *Joint Entries*

Projects involving two to six GFWC clubs qualify as joint entries. Only one entry form shall be submitted, with all club presidents signing the single form. Clubs involved in joint entries are not eligible to submit individual club entries. Joint entries selected as national winners shall send one representative to the GFWC Annual International Convention.

### *Previous Winners of the GFWC Community Improvement Contest Award*

Clubs that have won this national award at a previous GFWC Annual International Convention must submit an entirely different project entry for consideration in 2012. Winning projects that have been expanded will not be considered.

## CALENDAR

January 15, 2012	State judges' names, mailing addresses, e-mail addresses, and other contact information is due to the national GFWC Community Improvement Program Award chairman;
March 10, 2012	Club entries are due to state GFWC Community Improvement Program Award chairmen, postmarked by March 10, 2012.
March 10-20, 2012	Entries judged on state level.
March 25, 2012	List of first, second, and third place winners on a state level due to GFWC. Checks from GFWC for state winners will be issued to the GFWC club upon receipt and sent to the state presidents for awarding at their respective state conventions.
April 1, 2012	State's first place entry due to GFWC. Send to: Community Improvement Program Award, GFWC, 1734 N Street NW, Washington, DC 20036-2990.
Spring 2012	State award presentations at state conventions
April 2012	Two-day national judging at GFWC Headquarters in Washington, D.C.
June 2012	GFWC Community Improvement Program Awards presented at GFWC Annual International Convention

## TIPS FOR WINNING ENTRIES

- Identify and define the community need.
- Describe the process of choosing the project.
- Describe how the club engaged community support.
- Describe how the club financed the project and obtained media support.
- Recount how the club overcame obstacles.
- Provide a list of collaborating partners, including government agencies, other service groups, and professional organizations.
- Describe the results and successes, and the club's continuing role in this project.
- Explain the long-term effects of the project on the community.
- Describe how the contest influence changes in the community, e.g., increased awareness, willingness to work together, etc.
- Content is more important than appearance.

## AWARDS

GFWC awards a total of \$19,250 to state and national winners of the GFWC Community Improvement Program Award.

### *GFWC National Awards*

First Place	\$5,000
Second Place	\$3,500
Third Place	\$2,500
Fourth Place	\$1,500
Fifth Place	\$500
International Affiliate Award	\$500
Juniorette Award	\$250
<b>Total National Monetary Awards</b>	<b>\$13,750</b>

One member representative from each winning club will have the following expenses covered:

- Roundtrip transportation to attend the GFWC Annual International Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina.
- One night's lodging at the GFWC Convention hotel, ticket to attend the award ceremony, and GFWC Convention Registration fee.

### *GFWC State Awards*

First Place	\$50
Second Place	\$35
Third Place	\$25
<b>Total per state</b>	<b>\$110</b>
<b>Total for 50 State Federations</b>	<b>\$5,500</b>

## JUDGING CRITERIA

### *Project Selection—25 points*

- Community Need: Judges will look for clearly identified community issues that were considered in the project selection phase and review how the needs were addressed.
- Selection Process: Judges will look at the selection process and methodology used in choosing the projects.

*For more information on how you can help your club evaluate how it can best use its resources to meet a community need, please review the GFWC Leadership Advancement Guide in the GFWC Club Manual, which includes information on conducting a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats).*

### *Project Development—50 points*

- **Community Collaboration:** Judges will look for projects that create and sustain working relationships with other organizations and/or government agencies in the community. List all partners involved in your Community Improvement project.
- **Plan of Action:** Judges will evaluate how the club worked to execute its plans and accomplish its goals. Provide the details of your efforts and other documentation including photos, letters, project plans, news clippings, etc.

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- **Persistence of Effort:** Judges are interested in knowing what obstacles the club encountered and how it addressed such challenges.

### *Project Evaluation—25 points*

- Degree of Success: The judges will look for the specifics of your achievements. They will examine how the effort differed from what was originally envisioned. They will also look at what criteria were used to measure success, and for future plans for the project.

*For more information on project planning, please review the GFWC Leadership Advancement Guide in the GFWC Club Manual, which includes sample project plans and strategic plan templates that may assist you in measuring your achievements.*

- Permanence of Achievement: Judges will want you to explain the long-term effects the project will have on the community.
- Changed Attitudes and Practices: Judges are interested in whether or not the project resulted in increased community awareness; specifics are recommended here.