



## CFMC Grant Application

# COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION FOR FUNDING REQUESTS FOR THE Community Foundation of Middlesex County Competitive Cycle.

**Instructions:** Complete the application on the website. You may "Save and Continue Later" - the site will email you a link which is active for 30 days. Review instructions document for full details before completing. Complete all questions.

**Section V requires certain documents to be uploaded to the form - see the Application Instructions Document for a list of the required items. All items must be uploaded as PDF Files. The CFMC Budget Summary form is available on the website in Word. This document must be submitted as PDF file as well.**

### I. Application Information

**Legal Name of Organization**

Unashamed, Inc.

**Division or Department Name (if applicable)**

**Other Tax Exempt Entity?**

**Are you a 501(c)3 Organization**

Yes

**EIN #**

83-2202954

If your organization is not a 501(c) 3 tax exempt entity or division/department of a 170(c)1 government agency or religious organization, please contact Thayer Talbott, 860.347.0025, for further information before completing the application.

**Total Cost associated with request \$**

15375

**Dollar Amount Requested \$**

5000

**Summary Statement**

A \$5000 CFMC grant award would fund the cost of three (3) facilitators to implement programming and to cover the cost of meals for 50 for 40 students to attend Unashamed Inc.'s Girls and Boys Who Build Program. Three (3) facilitators are the leadership complement to the program and each is responsible for 2 sessions while each student is fed a healthy balanced meal while in our care.

## II. Funding Request Information

### 1. Proposal / Purpose

Girls and Boys Who Build (GABWB) is a 6-week program serving BIPOC, LGBTQIA+ middle school-aged youth (11-18 years of age) residing in the Cromwell, Middletown, and Portland areas. This series of workshops is designed to unite students in an interactive learning environment using team-building experiences to foster the development of self-confidence, healthy mental and emotional wellness, and connection within peer groups. The goals and objectives of this program are to:

- Promote self-acceptance and awareness in youth groups
- Develop communication in the youth community to positively affect relationship-building
- Demonstrate and develop anger management, stress management, resilience, and other wellness supports
- Expose youth to hands-on and interactive learning activities to demonstrate healthy and effective ways to use critical thinking and problem-solving
- Introduce students to the concepts of budgeting, saving, investing, and understanding credit and debt
- Engage youth in offsite engagements to strengthen connections, and collaboration, to build a greater sense of community

The program runs for six weeks, during July and August in a cohort style from 10 am to 2 pm once per week. The program is designed to build knowledge, skill, and effective application while sandwiching in team-building exercises to build safety and respect in the cohort. We must create opportunities to observe our students' ability to apply learnings. Providing students with opportunities to engage outside of workshops allows for practice using tools learned in the program and for staff to fill in any gaps in understanding upon observation.

The majority of participants at Unashamed, Inc. are from the Middletown area and we have identified 2 major challenges to address with the GABWB program; middle school violence and a lack of enriching resources, and programming for this age group. There has been a spike in student fights during the school year and youth need a safe space to decompress, learn, make mistakes, and become better versions of themselves. These counterproductive activities can make youth feel isolated and over time, unable to co-exist without friction and/or detrimental outcomes. The second challenge in the Middletown area specifically, is the lack of summer programming for this age group which leaves them vulnerable. Violence is sparking concern among Middletown residents during the school year and juvenile offenders have limited options for rehabilitation and social services support at any time during the year. Unashamed, Inc. is responding to this need by creating a space for these youth to express themselves and learn to respect other's expressions. We want to promote peace, coping strategies, and substantive lessons for emerging leaders.

In 2023 we served 38 high school girls and 3 non-binary students through the GABWB program. We identified challenges last year that provided us with a better perspective on the needs of our young people. We thoughtfully decided to implement the following resolutions:

- We changed from a female-identifying-only program to include all genders - Originally this program was called Girls Who Build and we realized that the content of this program could serve all. The fighting and communication breakdowns affect all.
- We believe that high school is too late for our youth to get these lessons, especially since the negative behaviors of high school students are now being mirrored by middle schoolers. We decided to pivot and market the program to middle school students and then follow their progress throughout their college careers.
- Last year, GABWB offered rolling admission. We hoped that all students would complete the program but were unsuccessful. We decided to implement a cohort model and enact stipends and other incentives to retain students.

Topics covered in the program are:

- **Week 1: Building Healthy Relationships and Friendships** - The "Building Healthy Relationships and Friendships" workshop is designed specifically for middle school students to explore and develop the skills necessary to cultivate positive relationships and friendships. Through interactive activities, group discussions, and real-life scenarios, participants gain a better understanding of what healthy relationships and friendships look like, how to establish boundaries, and how to navigate conflicts. The workshop aims to empower students with the knowledge and skills to build and maintain strong, supportive, and respectful relationships throughout their lives by fostering that relationship with self first.

- **Week 2: Axe Throwing** - This outing will encourage perseverance and resilience by teaching students to persevere, learn from failures, and keep trying until they succeed. Axe throwing backdrop to practice supporting one another and learning the value of working together and building strong relationships. Finally, successfully hitting the target in axe throwing can boost confidence. Students learn to trust in their abilities, believe in themselves, and take on new challenges with courage.
- **Week 3: Mind Matters: Navigating Mental Health and Trauma** - This workshop is designed to provide middle school students with a safe and engaging environment to explore and discuss the topics of mental health and trauma. Through interactive activities, discussions, and presentations, students will gain a better understanding of mental health, develop empathy toward others, and learn strategies to build resilience in the face of adversity. The workshop aims to destigmatize mental health issues, promote self-care, and foster supportive relationships among students.
- **Week 4: Smash Room** - A trip to a smash room provides a unique and experiential way for middle school students to explore and understand their emotions, learn how to manage them effectively, and develop healthy coping mechanisms for dealing with stress and negative feelings. Smashing objects in a controlled environment can be a cathartic and stress-relieving experience helping students release pent-up emotions and frustrations safely and healthily. Also, this experience encourages self-reflection and the subsequent understanding of emotional responses. We want our cohort to understand that it's normal to feel a range of emotions and that it's healthy to express and release them in appropriate ways.
- **Week 5: Cash Rules Everything Around Me: Financial Education**- GABWB will introduce students to the basic principles of managing money, setting financial goals, and making informed financial decisions. At the end of the workshop, each student will receive \$20 to open a bank account at Liberty Bank. This will give them hands-on experience in the process and encourage them to start saving and managing their money responsibly.
- **Week 6: Beat the Bomb** - A trip to "Beat the Bomb," an immersive team-based game experience that requires participants to use critical thinking to work together to solve challenges and complete tasks. The students learn the importance of communication, cooperation, and supporting each other to achieve common goals as well as time management and adaptability. With a time limit for each task, the students can practice prioritizing tasks, managing their time effectively, and adjusting their strategies based on changing circumstances.

Lunch will be provided for students at each session and round-trip transportation to and from Unashamed will be provided for field trips.

## 2. Sustainability and Assessing Impact

In the past, because of our rolling admission model, it was difficult to follow youth through high school. Many would not complete all 6 sessions and because they were high school students keeping in touch with them post-graduation was difficult. Moving forward, Unashamed, Inc. will implement a 3 prong approach:

1. Recruitment - Students who are recruited will commit to a cohort of 20. There are limited seats, exciting experiences, and incentives offered to create more value and commitment.
2. Evaluations - When students are enrolled Unashamed will complete intake forms and pre-assessments to test their understanding and application of various ideas. Post-assessments will capture growth. It is expected that we will be able to capture a 65% increase in understanding and application. The cohort will also be observed during field trips and case notes to support assessments will be created.
3. Retention -Unashamed will refer graduates to additional in-house opportunities and community partners who have programs that are specifically designed for high school-aged students once eligible. Upon completion of the program - cohorts will have quarterly meetings to take deeper dives into concepts taught in the program.

## III. Grant Program / Project Information

### Organization Area of Impact (choose ONE)

Public / Social Benefit (Civic Improvement/ Social Service)

**Grant Type (choose ONE)**

Program Development/Implementation

**Target Demographics (Select all that apply):**

- Youth (ages 13-17)
- Children (ages 6-12)
- Students
- Women and Girls
- At Risk Boys and Young Men
- LGBTQIA+
- BIPOC

**Geographic Area(s) Served By This Application:**

- Cromwell
- Middletown
- Portland

**Total Number of People in Middlesex County Personally Impacted**

38 unique individuals served in the GABWB Program in 2023

**IV. Organization Information**

Board of Directors / Trustees Information

**Percent (%) of Directors/Trustees who contribute annually to Operations**

Zero (0)

**Total Number of Directors/Trustees:**

5

**Average number attending in person:**

5

**Total Number of Board meetings held last year:**

6

**Year of Return:**

2022

**Date most recent IRS Form 990 was filed:**

2023

**Organization's Total Operating Budget**

226100.00

**Organization's Fiscal Year**

Jan 1 - Dec 31

**Division Operating Budget Information**

**National Organization Chapter Information**

**Did you RECEIVE a competitive process grant in the:**

**Brief Background Statement of the Organization:**

In 2019, Unashamed, Inc. was established as a result of the trauma experienced by Executive Director and Founder, Sana

Cotten, and her twin brother; relegated to the foster care system due to their drug-addicted family. Despite these emotional traumas, Sana has emerged as an unashamed woman, boldly sharing her story. Unashamed, Inc. was born in 2021 to foster emotional health in disadvantaged and at-risk youth and young adults who have experienced incarceration, homelessness, foster care, domestic violence, and teen pregnancy. Through various programs and services, Unashamed “plants seeds” to equip youth and young adults with the tools they need to dismantle unhealthy generational patterns and transition from surviving to thriving.

## V. Additional Information To Be Included with the Application

**Please Note: Additional information requested below MUST be uploaded in PDF files. Other document formats will not be accepted by the application form. Attempts to upload other file formats could result in a loss of all application data entered.**

### A. Current Organization Operations Budget (Required)

- 2024-Budget-.pdf

### B. Board of Directors and Officers List (Required)

- Board-Members.pdf

### C. IRS Tax Exempt Determination Letter

- IRS-Determination-Letter.pdf

### D. For Program/Project Requests only - CFMC Budget Summary Form:

- Girls-and-Boys-Build-Budget.pdf

### E. Organizations serving a region greater than Middlesex County - county-based budget summary:

### F. America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

No

### ARPA Funding detail

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**Additional financial documentation, including the organization's most recent audit, annual report, and IRS Form 990 may also be required. Only provide this information if requested.**

For programs or projects which are collaborations among two or more organizations or where an organization provides in-school or after-school programming for schools, the Community Foundation requires a list of organizations or schools partnering with your organization as well as Letters of Support.

For the purposes of this application, collaborations are defined as partnerships where two or more agencies are committed through staffing, funding, and resource allocation to the goals and objectives of the program described. Because the nature of the collaboration requires two or more entities to work together, for the purposes of funding, only one organization may complete the application, and in doing so, accepts responsibility for all evaluative and fiduciary reporting.

For all collaborations, the Community Foundation requires letters of support from the non-applicant organization(s) and/or from the school(s) and school district(s) at which the applicant organization is the program.

**Is this application in collaboration with a School(s) or School District(s)?**

No

**Is this application a collaboration of two or more nonprofit organizations (NOT schools)?**

No

**If this is an On-Going Collaboration, how long has the collaboration existed?**

**If Yes, is this a New or On-Going Collaboration?**

**List of Collaborators**

**Letters of Support (if a collaboration with schools or other nonprofits))**

## VI. Organization Contact Information

### Are you a new nonprofit applicant to the Community Foundation?

No

#### Title

Executive Director

#### Executive Officer's Name

Sana Cotten

#### Executive Officer Email

[iamunashamedllc@gmail.com](mailto:iamunashamedllc@gmail.com)

#### Phone

(860) 759-5773

#### Title

#### Contact Person

#### Application Contact Email

#### Phone

#### Mailing Address

505 Main Street  
Middletown, Connecticut 06457  
United States

#### Street Address

Connecticut  
United States

#### Website

<https://www.unashamedinc.org/>

#### Social Media Channels

@unashamedinc - Facebook and Instagram

## VII. Non-Funding Needs

We appreciate this funding opportunity and your willingness to be thought partners with Unashamed, Inc. as we navigate our trajectory in the non-profit world. It would be very helpful to be exposed to resources and trainings to build our capacity regarding board development, budget forecasting and business plan writing.



## **VIII. Marketing and Public Relations**

Organizations receiving grants from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County must promote their funding awards according to the marketing and public relations guidelines established by the Community Foundation. By signing the application below, the CEO/Executive Director understands the Community Foundation's marketing and public relations requirements if awarded a grant. The Community Foundation will host a seminar on marketing guidelines and tips for grantees annually. The Community Foundation's Grantee Communications Kit may be downloaded on our website in the Nonprofit Resources section, [middlesexcountycf.org/nonprofits/resources/forms-pr-guidelines/](http://middlesexcountycf.org/nonprofits/resources/forms-pr-guidelines/).

## **IX. Tax Exempt Standing and Use of Grant Funding Certification**

By signing this application, the CEO/Executive Director/Board President is certifying that your organization is a qualified 501c3 organization or other charitable organization recognized and currently in good standing with the IRS, or 170(c)(1) governmental agencies. Should a grant be approved by the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, these funds may only be used for the purpose outlined in your original application; you must notify us if you are unable to do so. If grant funding is provided, you may only use these funds for charitable purpose as described in Section 170(c)2 of the IRS code, and funds may not be used for any political or lobbying activity. In addition, no tangible benefits, goods or services may be received by our donors or by staff members of the Community Foundation of Middlesex County in exchange for grant funding.

### **Signature Certification**

I certify that my printed name as stated and assigned below constitutes my signature and may be accepted as such.

**Title**

Executive Director /Founder

**Printed Name**

Sana Cotten

**Date**

02/27/2024