



# *Weaving Social Trust One Community at a Time*

Weaver Awards Community Host Application Info Session  
Thursday, September 10th  
12pm ET



# Introduce yourself in the Chat.

1. Your name
2. Your location
3. The organization(s) you are representing



# Weave: The Social Fabric Project

**Weave identifies, supports, and connects everyday leaders who are strengthening trust and belonging in their communities.**

*Building a national movement rooted in local action.*

## Identify

Find everyday leaders quietly rebuilding trust.

## Support

Provide resources, training, and connection.

## Connect

Link local leaders into a national network.



Weave's key objective is to grow a people-powered movement that builds social trust nationwide by *inspiring* weavers in local communities.



## Purpose and Agenda

This session covers what the Weaver Awards are, what hosting them involves, and what the Community Host role asks of an organization.

Our aim is to provide you with enough information to decide whether applying makes sense for your organization.

- 01 What is weaving?
- 02 What are the Weaver Awards?
- 03 What is the Community Host role?
- 04 How does my organization apply?
- 05 Q&A





*What is weaving?*



## What is *weaving*?

*Weaving* is the practice of building meaningful relationships that set the conditions for social trust to grow in communities. Weavers:

- Recognize the dignity in every person
- Strengthen relationships within groups and across difference
- Focus on shared needs and local strengths
- Keep their commitments
- Invest time in meaningful connection





## What makes *weaving* different?

Many kinds of community building are positive —weaving goes deeper by centering relationships and building social trust.

While many kinds of community building are positive....

Starting a food garden where neighbors plant and harvest their individual plots.

...Weaving goes deeper by centering relationships and building social trust.

Starting a community garden as a means to strengthen bonds between neighbors. Folks build relationships while farming a shared plot, cooking together, and providing produce to neighbors without access to fresh foods.



*Weaving* can be formal or informal,  
and all weaving shares four qualities:

### **Welcoming**

It invites people to join as they are

### **Continuous**

It builds relationships that deepen over time through ongoing engagement



### **Local**

It brings together people who share the same neighborhood, town, or region

### **Mutual**

Every participant both gives and receives benefits



*Why weaving?*



## The *Challenge*

The United States is grappling with a profound erosion of social trust.

Less than half of US adults say they trust most or all their neighbors.

*Pew Research Center (2025)*

8%  
decrease since  
2015

US adults are more likely to say their fellow Americans are morally bad than good.

*Pew Research Center (2026)*

53%  
say  
morally bad



“Relationships do not scale. They have to be built one at a time, through patience and forbearance. But norms do scale. When people in a community cultivate caring relationships, and do so repeatedly in a way that gets communicated to others, then norms are established. Trustworthy action is admired; empathy is celebrated. Cruelty is punished and ostracized.”

*David Brooks*  
**The Relationalist Manifesto**



What are the  
Weaver Awards?



## The Weaver Awards

The Weaver Awards are microawards designed to inspire weaving and weavers by celebrating neighborhood leaders who are strengthening relationships and building connection in their community.



2024 Baltimore Weaver Awardees



2025 Northwest Arkansas Weaver Awardees



## *The Weaver Awards*

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The awards are built to reach people most institutional programs never touch. Many weavers have no staff, no budget, and no legal entity, and would not be recognized or rewarded through a conventional grant process.

- Awards of **\$2,500 to \$5,000**
- Open to **individuals, small informal groups, and small organizations** with operating budgets under \$250,000
- Easy to apply for and simple to report on



## Who can apply

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The Awards welcome:

- Individuals
- Small informal groups
- Small organizations with an operating budget of no more than \$250,000.
- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Must live, work, or learn in target geography

Projects must not restrict participation based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or identity, political party, or faith.



## What Awardees Receive

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-  A micro-award between \$2,500 and \$5,000
-  National recognition through public announcement via the Aspen Institute's communications channels
-  Resources and tools
-  Connections to other weavers nationally and locally
-  Spotlight opportunities





*What is the Community  
Host role?*

**25 organizations are already doing this work. 25 more will join them this year.**

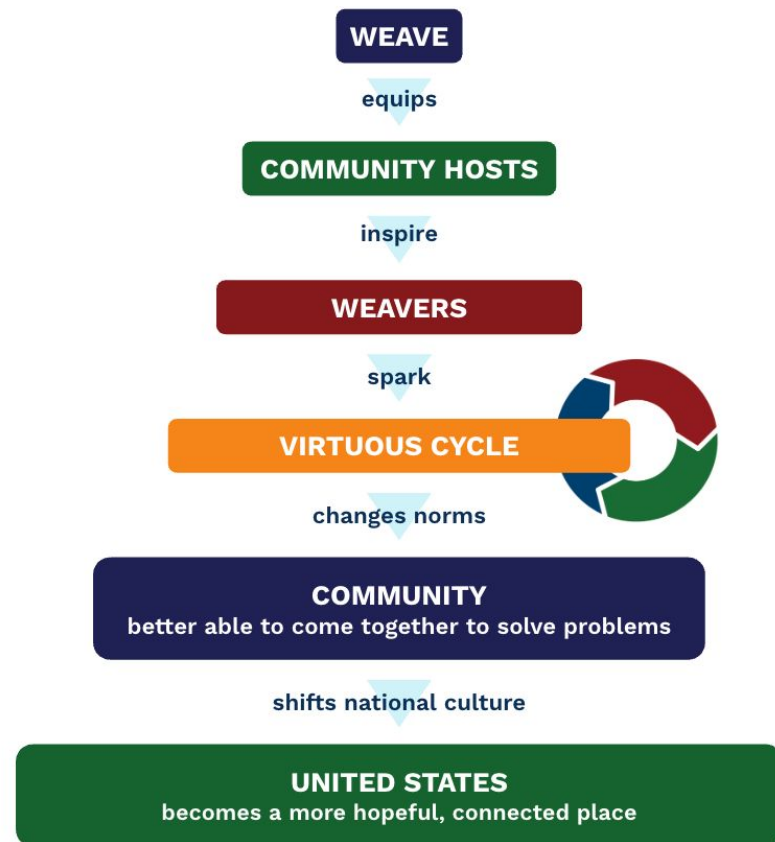
Community Hosts invest in the weavers who foster positive relationships and address immediate community needs, while leading a shift in norms toward connection and trust that will benefit generations to come.





## How it Works

- **Weave** provides the model, the tools, funding, a national peer network, and measurement support
- **Community Hosts** run the awards locally, choosing how to fit them to their community
- **Local Weavers** receive \$2,500 to \$5,000 and join a growing national network





# What Community Hosts Do

Community Hosts decide how to bring the Weaver Awards to their communities, but share common roles and responsibilities:



## **Activate weavers and weaving**

Leading the local awards process to identify, celebrate, resource, and connect weavers.



## **Show the power and impact of weaving**

Engaging with Weave's efforts to measure weaving across communities.



## **Amplify stories of weavers and weaving**

Uplifting weavers as trusted local leaders through speaking opportunities and storytelling.



## **Build the national movement**

Participating actively in the Weave community, especially alongside other Community Hosts.



# Requirements

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## Commitment

- A **four-year MoU** to host the awards locally
- Distribute **20 microawards per year** to individuals, informal groups, and/or small organizations for all four years
- Submit data and financial **reports twice a year**
- Participate in **biannual check-in calls** with Weave
- Attend **onboarding** and one in-person annual **Harvesting Session** at the end of Year 1

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## Staffing

- Each Community Host determines the staff configuration most appropriate for their organization
- Many engage one mid- to senior-level project manager at **~30%** of their time
- An entry-level associate or communications officer at **25%**
- And a C-suite officer or director at **10%**

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## Eligibility

- Must be a **nonprofit or public entity** located in one of the 50 states
- Organizational budget over **\$1,000,000**
- A track record of running **successful, stable programs** in and with the community
- **Individual organizations** or **collaborations** of two to three organizations may apply



# Funding Timeline



- **\$50,000 to \$100,000** is distributed as awards in each of the **first two years**.
- Funds beyond the awards can support **events, communications, staff time, honoraria and other program elements**. Carryover between Years 1 and 2 is reviewed case by case; there is no carryover into Years 3 and 4.
- **Weave's funding is catalytic**. It exists to get the AWards running locally and set a foundation to attract additional funding and support.



# Benefits of Becoming a Community Host



## Reach residents that existing programs miss

Awards go to individuals and informal groups, not only to established organizations.



## Deepen standing as a trusted convener

A visible, recurring mechanism for recognizing the neighbors who hold a community together.



## Use a ready-made model rather than building one

Proven tools, templates, technical support, and learning opportunities come with the role.



## Gain measurement and evaluation support

Measurement and evaluation support for relational work that is notoriously hard to assess.



## Join a national peer network

Community Hosts advancing a new approach to community investment.



## National Spotlight & Visibility

Community Hosts receive national recognition upon selection and access communication opportunities through the larger program.



*How does my  
organization apply?*



# The Application

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## About Your Org

Application Type

Org Information (e.g., address,  
org type)

Key Contact Information

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## Interest

Mission

Interest and Alignment

Past performance

Impact

Challenge + Risk Mitigation

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## Implementation

Grantmaking Activity

Program Geography

Staffing

Cohort Engagement

Program Integration

Budget

Sustainability



# Key Dates

The application is now live and accessible at [weavers.org/awards](https://weavers.org/awards).

SEP 16, 2026



## Office Hours

virtual, 12 to 1 pm ET

OCT 4, 2026



## Application Closes

11:59 pm ET

EARLY DEC



## Notifications

applicants notified,  
December 2026

JAN 2027



## Funds and Onboarding

Year 1 funds distributed;  
virtual onboarding  
Jan 20 and Feb 3

FEB 2027



## In Person

Washington DC,  
February 24 to 25, with a  
reception the evening of 23



# The Selection Process

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Weave is selecting 25 Community Hosts in this round, joining the 25 selected last year. Another 25 will be selected next year.

- Applications are submitted by October 4
- Weave reviews applications and may follow up with questions
- A selection committee evaluates applications against the published criteria
- 25 hosts are notified in early December



Q&A



## Question & Answer

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- Can backbone organizations of collective impact initiatives apply
  - Nonprofit organizations, public charities, and public entities with a strong track record of community building and an operating budget of at least \$1,000,000 are eligible to apply, either independently or as part of a 2–3 organization collaboration. As long as the backbone organization meets these criteria, they are eligible to apply.



## Question & Answer

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- Do Community Hosts also determine their own timeline around awards/events? Or is that a schedule that you all provide to us?
  - While Weave provides a recommended timeline for activity implementation, Community Hosts have the flexibility to adapt the specific timing of their activities to their local context and needs. Based on the time it typically takes for Community Hosts to learn about Weave's model and the relevant awards management systems, the earliest some Hosts may launch their awards is late spring/early summer. All Hosts should plan to select winners by early fall and are required to participate in a coordinated public announcement in December.



## Question & Answer

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- Are national organizations with local site networks eligible to apply?
  - Nonprofit organizations, public charities, and public entities with a strong track record of community building and an operating budget of at least \$1,000,000 are eligible to apply, either independently or as part of a 2–3 organization collaboration. As long as the national organization meets this criteria, they are eligible to apply. That said, because weaving is hyperlocal, national organizations must clearly define their target local geography in the application and demonstrate their ability to effectively engage community members in that area.



## Question & Answer

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- If applying as a collaboration does each org have to have a budget over \$1 million?  
Or just one of the collaborating organizations?
  - If applying as a collaboration of 2–3 organizations, only the organization serving as the execution lead must fulfill the minimum annual operating budget requirement of \$1,000,000. The execution lead is responsible for program management and activity implementation.



## Question & Answer

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- Can you clarify the budgetary breakdown from year to year? Does the grant need to be spent down in Years 1 and 2 instead of being distributed across all four years?
  - Weave provides startup funding for the first two years (\$125,000 in Year 1 and \$100,000 in Year 2). Hosts must distribute at least 20 microawards (\$2,500–\$5,000 each) per year and are required to spend down each annual allocation within the calendar year it is disbursed. Hosts are responsible for securing funding to sustain the awards in Years 3 and 4.



## Question & Answer

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- Do we have to build the actual weaver awards into our budget?
  - Yes. Community Hosts must include the microaward distribution (at least 20 awards per year ranging from \$2,500 to \$5,000 each) as a core line item in their programmatic budget. Remaining funds can be used to support administrative, event, and staffing costs.



## Question & Answer

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- If we receive the first allocation in February 2027, when do the funds need to be expended?
  - The Year 1 grant funds (\$125,000 disbursed in early 2027) must be fully spent within the 2027 calendar year.



## Question & Answer

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- Do you have more information on reporting requirements?
  - Community Hosts are required to:
    - Submit data and financial reports twice a year (one interim and one final report). Data reports are in the form of a survey capturing data points such as the number of activities implemented by both Community Hosts and Weaver Awardees, and the number of participants engaged.
    - Participate in scheduled biannual check-in calls with the Weave team.
    - Attend an annual in-person Harvest Session with peer Community Hosts



## Question & Answer

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- If an organization or individual does not have a budget of \$50000, does that disqualify them or the organization from receiving the Weaver Award?
  - No. To receive a Weaver Award, recipients can be individuals, informal groups, or formal organizations with annual budgets under \$250,000. The annual budget criteria only applies to formal/incorporated organizations, not to individuals or informal/unincorporated groups.



## Question & Answer

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- Do Weaver Awards need to be all \$2500 or \$5000? Is it possible to have 10 of one and 10 of the other based on the applications that are received?
  - Yes. Awards can be any amount between \$2,500 and \$5,000. Distributing a mix of award amounts (such as ten \$2,500 awards and ten \$5,000 awards) is fully permissible as long as a minimum of 20 awards are distributed per year.



## Question & Answer

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- What are the logistics of awarding to weavers? For example, if they are individuals?
  - When considering the appropriate vehicle to make awards to individuals, whether they be “grants”, “gifts”, “stipends”, “awards” or any other designation, keep in mind there is no overarching legal or financial definition for these terms and their corresponding use. They are often used interchangeably and even the IRS does not provide a blanket definition or explanation. Community Hosts should consult their own legal and financial teams to determine if they have the ability to grant to individuals, and if so, the best method for doing so within the context of your organizational structure, policies, and values.



## Question & Answer

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- Should the awardees be doing their own weaving work, independently of the community host? Or can the community host create a program for weavers to engage in and then the awards support that coordinated effort?
  - The awards center on resourcing grassroots leaders and neighborhood initiatives that build connection. Weave supports both existing community initiatives and newly launched weaving efforts. While Community Hosts may offer optional cohort programming (e.g., workshops, networking, celebrations), the primary award funding directly resources the recipient's community project independent of the Community Host.



## Question & Answer

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- Are you looking to establish host sites in certain communities? Would you fund only 1 per community or multiple?
  - Weave does not target specific geographic regions and seeks a diverse geographic spread. Applicants in regions with an existing Host are eligible, but must clearly explain how they will differentiate their program and serve different communities.



## Question & Answer

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- Do you have an online learning community that those of us who are interested can join?
  - Yes, Weave operates an online community platform called Weaving Us (accessible at [weaving.us](https://weaving.us)) where community builders can connect and share resources.



## Question & Answer

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- What is a typical population size that a Community Host would serve? Is there a community size that would be too small?
  - Weaving is inherently hyperlocal, and a target community can range from a specific neighborhood or town to a full city or rural region. There is no minimum population requirement or size restriction as long as the applicant clearly defines their target geography. When considering if a population is too small, interested organizations should consider their ability to identify 20 awardees from that target population every year for four years.



## Question & Answer

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- Does the budgetary requirement to become a Community Host apply to one organization or combined?
  - For collaborative applications, the \$1,000,000 operating budget requirement must be met specifically by the organization serving as the execution lead. The execution lead is responsible for program management and activity implementation.



## Your Action Items

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- Sign up for the [Weave newsletter](#) for updates on the application process (if you haven't already) and join [Weaving Us](#)
- Follow Weave: Instagram: [@weavesocialfabric](#); LinkedIn: [Weave: The Social Fabric Project at the Aspen Institute](#); and Facebook: [Weave: The Social Fabric Project](#)
- Share these materials with others at your org so that you're ready to apply when the application opens



*Thank You!*

*Questions?*

Contact us at:  
[weaverawards@aspeninstitute.org](mailto:weaverawards@aspeninstitute.org)