

Is the Force for Positive Change award a grant or a prize?

The Force for Positive Change awards are cash prizes meant to recognize, celebrate and highlight high impact, successful social enterprises, whether for-profit or not-for-profit, that are operating in Wisconsin. Unlike a grant, there is no expectation of progress or final reports. These are unrestricted funds and can be spent in any way that the recipients would like on behalf of the winning organizations.

Are the winners obligated to do anything once they accept their awards?

While we do not have formal reporting requirements, we do hope that winners will use their media platforms to communicate with their audiences about the prize to help grow awareness and impact of the event and competition. We do check in with past winners from time to time to inquire about their status and may invite some past winners to present at future Force for Positive Change events. This participation is completely optional and meant to provide opportunities for current applicants and others in the social entrepreneurial ecosystem to learn about these honorees, make connections and exchange information. There is no formal reporting requirement associated with the Force for Positive Change awards.

What do you mean by “Social Enterprise?”

Social enterprise, social entrepreneurship and social innovation are all evolving terms with varying definitions. In this competition, a social enterprise:

- can be a for-profit, nonprofit, or hybrid entity
- In the case of nonprofit social enterprises, the Force for Positive Change competition is particularly interested in those social enterprises that include an aspect of their operation that aims to generate income by selling goods or services to address social and/or environmental challenges
- In the case of for-profit social enterprises, the Force for Positive Change competition is focused on those businesses whose missions go beyond making a profit to embrace a social or environmental focus that is integrated into the organization's operations and has an impact within their community, especially focusing on Wisconsin, i.e., those businesses that have a double or triple bottom line.

How do you define social impact?

There are many definitions of social impact. For the purposes of the Force for Positive Change competition, we define social impact as the net effect of activities intended to create positive and lasting change for Wisconsin communities and the well-being of individuals and families. There are many kinds of organizations and many arenas through which to create social impact. We have aligned with the [17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) as a way of describing the primary area of impact that applicant organizations address.

How long will the application take to complete?

The application is designed in two phases:

- Phase I is designed to identify those social enterprises that meet the basic eligibility requirements and whose objectives align with the basic goals of the competition, i.e., organizations that are committed to making a positive impact in Wisconsin in one or more of the targeted categories, (i.e., in the areas delineated in the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)).
- A select pool of social enterprises will be invited to complete the Phase II application to document their significant, innovative and sustainable impact in Wisconsin.

We anticipate that organizations can complete the Phase I application in 2-4 hours and the Phase II application in 4-6 hours, including participating in a short interview and providing a short video.

What are the award criteria?

Awardees will demonstrate significant improvement of lives in Wisconsin and will articulate an approach that can be sustained, replicated and has the potential to scale in other areas of the state and possibly beyond.

The selection criteria below will be used to judge all entrants during Phases I and II of the competition. The three optional selection criteria allow the entrant to be considered for the three new prize categories for the 2022 competition.

Phase I criteria

- The extent to which the organization has strong connections to Wisconsin through its staff, investors, directors, clients/customers
- The degree to which their organization values and measures beneficial societal impact in Wisconsin
- The extent to which the organization is able to demonstrate financial sustainability
- The degree to which their organization pursues an impactful approach to address root causes of societal challenges in Wisconsin

Phase II criteria

- The probability of continued success and ability to be a force for positive change in Wisconsin
- The organization's plans for future implementation and growth
- The scalability and replicability of the organization's approach to creating a lasting positive impact in Wisconsin.

Optional selection criteria – to be considered for one of the three special prizes, entrants need to incorporate one of the following criteria into their responses for Phase I and Phase II.

- The enterprise demonstrates a commitment to addressing systemic racism through all aspects of its operations.
- The enterprise demonstrates an integrated plan for responding to some of the current challenges being faced by organizations in Wisconsin and beyond,

including inflation, labor shortages, mental health and well-being of staff, the pandemic, climate change and more with respect to business continuity and/or staff support.

- The enterprise demonstrates its primary dedication to addressing the particular challenges confronting Wisconsin's rural population

Will there be different awards for different sectors?

There are FOUR (4) types of awards this year. At least three awards will be made in the open category (can be to either a nonprofit or a for-profit enterprise) based on scoring by the judges. Applicants must be able to identify that their organization addresses at least one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals to be eligible for an award. Multiple awards may be made to organizations that focus on the same UN Sustainable Development Goal.

This year there are three additional special consideration awards open to both for-profit and nonprofit social enterprises:

- Fight for racial equity for Wisconsin's Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities
- Rural prosperity
- Organizational resiliency

All awards are \$10,000 prizes. For more information on these special consideration prizes, please review the Phase I applications where you will find a special question for each of these awards.

Can my organization apply for all three supplemental awards?

Yes, you can certainly apply for all three. We will not award an organization more than one award, but if your organization is active in all three areas, we will consider each of your submissions on the merits.

I am a farmer. Can I apply for the rural prosperity award?

Farmers are certainly welcome to apply if they can identify a practice or aspect of their operation that addresses the challenges facing Wisconsin's rural communities, e.g., workforce development, environmental sustainability, training, education, immigration, food access or other social issues impacting rural Wisconsin communities. For additional information or to discuss your specific circumstance, please contact Laura Heisler at laura@warf.org or 608-770-4134.

Are for-profit enterprises and nonprofits competing with one another?

Yes and no. We have separate applications and separate scoring rubrics for for-profits and nonprofits, so you are not competing across organization types. However, we have not designated specific prizes for each type of organization. Historically, we have had a fairly even balance of winners in both sectors.

Will more mature organizations be more likely to score higher?

We are interested in an organization's commitment to creating positive change in Wisconsin, its ability to assess how well it is creating that change and addressing root problems, its ability to scale to make a proportionate impact and its ability to effect change while striving for financial sustainability. However, very early-stage social enterprises may not be able to showcase their ability to create change or their ability to scale. In the past, winners have ranged from young (1-3 years in operation) to well-established (>10 years in operation).

I see that you ask about my organization's relationship to Wisconsin. Why is this important?

The Force for Positive Change awards are all about recognizing existing social enterprises that are ***by Wisconsin, for Wisconsin and in Wisconsin***. We require that there be a meaningful connection to the state. We are looking for at least one of these connections. It is possible that some organizations are based in Wisconsin and benefit stakeholders beyond Wisconsin or conversely that organizations have a base of operations elsewhere and still benefit Wisconsin. We just want to know how your organization relates to Wisconsin.

What constitutes a base of operations in Wisconsin?

At least one of the following

- Bricks and mortar operation in Wisconsin

- A full-time equivalent (FTE) employee with a Wisconsin residence

Are we being evaluated on the size of our organization or its budget or how long we've been in operation?

We ask about your organization's size, both in terms of employees and budget, so that we can understand the scale of your operation, your stage of development, and your ability to scale your organization's social impact. We are interested in the impact that you are having relative to your size and where you are in your organization's maturity.

As for the question regarding how long you have been in operation, we are interested in social enterprises that can demonstrate both a commitment to social enterprise, and accomplishments in the field.

Will there be an honorable mention category this year?

Honorable mention awards will be made at the judges' discretion and pending sufficient funds. Any honorable mention awards will be announced at the fall Force for Positive Change event.

Will there be an interview as part of the application process?

Yes, Phase II applicants will be invited for an in-person or video interview and will be welcome to identify the most appropriate personnel from their organization to participate.

What is the background of the judges?

The panel of judges is composed of experts from the for-profit, nonprofit and academic sectors, as well as investors and granting organizations.