

Autism Society Greater WI Summary Report

Information about the Applicant

The Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin was founded in 1979 by a group of parents with the goal of providing autism-related education and developing local resources for individuals and families affected by autism. Previously known as the Autism Society of Wisconsin, the organization changed its name to the Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin in 2019 to reflect a change in service area. The Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin is based out of Menasha and serves the northern 53 counties in Wisconsin while supporting a local chapter network.

The mission of the Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin is to create connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully. We work to promote lifelong access and opportunity for Autistic individuals and their families to be fully included members of the community. Our core services center around support, education, information & referral, advocacy, and community building.

Statement of Need

The Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin has hosted an annual conference for Autistic individuals, their family members, and supporting professionals for over 30 years. The conference is one of the few statewide events existing in Wisconsin bringing the entire Autism community together. It is especially important to ASGW that Autistic individuals are well-represented at this conference and that the conference environment is accessible to those with sensory or communication differences. Individuals with Autism often face financial barriers in attending the conference. In addition, large events such as the conference can often be overwhelming in both sensory and communication aspects.

The Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin is seeking support from the Wispact Foundation to provide 15 conference scholarships and travel stipends to autistic individuals, provide sensory fidgets, and provide communication badges to registrants. With the support of the Wispact Foundation, the Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin was able to offer these accommodations at its conference in 2022 and received overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Project Goals and Expected Benefits

1) Increase attendance & representation of Autistic individuals at the Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin's Annual Conference

Objective: Open conference scholarship & travel stipend application process for youth and adults with Autism by 12/31/22

Objective: Award 15 conference registration and travel stipends to Autistic individuals by April 2023

2) Ensure that the conference environment is inclusive, accessible, and Autism-friendly. Objective: Provide sensory fidgets to conference attendees.

Objective: Provide communication pins to all conference attendees.

Project Implementation Plan

Task	Date	Person Responsible
Open application for scholarships and travel stipends	October 17, 2022	Amber LeFevre
Purchase communication pins	February 1, 2023	Amber LeFevre
Purchase sensory fidgets	February 1, 2023	Amber LeFevre

Close application and award scholarships and travel stipends	March 20, 2023	Amber LeFevre
Reserve hotel rooms for scholarship recipients	March 27, 2023	Amber LeFevre
Reach out to scholarship recipients to gather feedback about process	May 1, 2023	Amber LeFevre

Evaluation Plan

The Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin will evaluate the effectiveness of the project using registration data, conference feedback forms, and direct communication with those with autism attending the conference. The Education & Outreach Coordinator for the Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin will be responsible for documenting progress toward project goals by eliciting feedback through surveys and direct communication with scholarship recipients.

Budget

Conference Scholarships	15X\$100 = \$1,500.00
Travel Stipends	15X\$300 = \$4,500.00
Sensory Fidgets	\$1,750.00
Communication Pins	\$250.00
Total	\$8,000.00

Staff Recommendation

The Grant application can be recommended for approval. The proceeds will make the opportunity available to persons with autism that could not otherwise afford it on their own. In addition the sensory fidgets and communication pins will directly benefit persons with autism while attending the conference. These will help them cope with the stimulus as well as be able to navigate engagement in their preferred manner.