

RFLD.

AN RFLD GRANTMAKING FACILITY · GUIDELINES 2026

West African Feminist Fund (WAFF)

Fast, accessible grants for local organisations improving the health, rights and opportunities of women and girls across West Africa.

Application window

September to October 2026

rflgd.org/waff-fund

Apply at rflgd.org/waff-fund

SUMMARY

West African Feminist Fund (WAFF)

Local organisations deliver much of the progress on women's health, rights and economic opportunity in West Africa, yet they receive a small share of the funding. The West African Feminist Fund (WAFF), a facility of the Réseau des Femmes Leaders pour le Développement (RFLD), moves flexible money to them quickly and with light procedures.

WAFF combines grants with financial, security and organisational support so that the organisations it funds become stronger, more accountable and better able to raise funds on their own.

Eligible countries. Benin · Burkina Faso · Cabo Verde · Côte d'Ivoire · The Gambia · Ghana · Guinea · Guinea-Bissau · Liberia · Mali · Niger · Nigeria · Senegal · Sierra Leone · Togo

Why WAFF

Less than 3% of global funding for gender equality reaches West Africa directly. Complex applications, language requirements and strict registration rules keep many effective local groups out of international grants, especially where registration is slow, costly or risky.

The region faces political instability and conflict, particularly in the Sahel, rising pressure on women's rights and on the people who defend them, and climate shocks that put women and girls, who often secure food and water for their households, at higher risk of displacement and violence.

What makes WAFF different

Decisions in 5 working days

Urgent Action requests, for example after an arrest or a physical attack, are decided within five working days.

French or English

Applications are accepted in either language, and the team helps grantees work across the region's civil-law and common-law systems.

A vetted intermediary

RFLD holds NGOsource equivalency and passes unqualified external audits. It carries the compliance work for international funders and protects local groups.

WHAT WE FUND

WAFF supports work across the following areas.

01

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

Access to reproductive health services and information, including contraception, within each country's legal framework.

02

Maternal and newborn health

Community efforts and policy work that reduce maternal and newborn deaths through better antenatal, delivery and postnatal care.

03

Ending FGM and child marriage

Community-led change, dialogue with leaders, alternative rites of passage and care for survivors.

04

Gender-based violence

Prevention, legal, medical and psychosocial services for survivors, and work against the stigma that keeps them silent.

05

Women's leadership and civic participation

Candidate training, advocacy for parity and women's participation in decision-making bodies.

06

Economic opportunity

Financial inclusion, women's enterprises and cooperatives, fair pay and decent work.

07

Protection of defenders and digital safety

Security assessments, digital safety training, secure tools and rapid protection for defenders under threat.

08

Climate, environment and WASH

Women's leadership in adaptation and access to clean water and sanitation.

09

Peace and security

Women's participation in conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding.

10

Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups

Dedicated support for organisations working with Vulnerable Groups who are often left out of mainstream funding.

11

Mental health and wellbeing

Psychosocial support, burnout prevention and care for frontline teams.

12

Documentation and advocacy

Documenting rights violations to support evidence-based advocacy, shadow reports and strategic litigation.

FOUR FUNDING WINDOWS

Four funding windows

Window	Amount	Purpose	Timeline
Urgent Action	Up to US\$5,000	Legal defence, medical emergencies, relocation, digital security	5-day decision, open all year
Capacity Building	Up to US\$20,000	Core costs, salaries, rent, audits, strategic planning	Periodic calls
Advocacy	Up to US\$30,000	Campaigns, research, coalitions	Periodic calls
Vulnerable Groups Inclusion	Up to US\$30,000	Safe spaces, mental health and advocacy with Vulnerable Groups	Periodic calls

Call dates are published at rflgd.org/waff-fund.

Beyond the grant

Financial management

Help to build financial systems that pass an audit.

Resource mobilisation

Training to diversify funding sources.

Security assessments

Digital and physical security reviews for every grantee.

WAFF alumni network

A regional network for learning and exchange.

Access and inclusion

No mandatory registration

Registration can be slow, costly or risky. WAFF does not require it and offers fiscal sponsorship to unregistered groups.

Light reporting

For Urgent Action grants we ask for a one-page summary and proof of expenditure. Oral reporting is available.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Theory of change



From application to decision

- Eligibility and document screening, usually within 10 working days of the deadline.
- Expert review by regional practitioners and thematic experts over three to four weeks.
- Due diligence proportionate to the grant size.
- Decision by the WAFF Grants Committee, with written feedback to every applicant.

How applications are scored



CURRENT CALL

September to October 2026

We invite local organisations, women human rights defenders and community groups across West Africa to apply. The window is open to organisations that need core support, funding for an advocacy campaign or urgent protection.

Apply at rflgd.org/waff-fund

WAFF is RFLD's commitment to the organisations that improve the lives of women and girls in West Africa every day. Their work deserves fair, reliable and timely funding.

Questions: programs@rflgd.org · Confidential reporting: integrity@rflgd.org