



WellsFest 2027 Beneficiary Application

About WellsFest

WellsFest is a music festival through which Wells Memorial United Methodist Church in Jackson, Mississippi, helps a social service non-profit. WellsFest was created in 1984 as a “love offering” to the Jackson metro area. Known as “Jackson’s Original Music Festival,” WellsFest is a family-friendly event free from alcohol and drugs and with no admission fee. The Southeastern Tourism Society has listed WellsFest as a “Top 20 Event.” WellsFest has also received the Mississippi Arts Commission Governor’s Award for Arts in the Community and the Governor’s GIVE Award for Outstanding Achievement in Community Building.

WellsFest includes live music acts, a children’s play area, arts and crafts vendors, food trucks, a pass-along & heirloom plant sale, an online auction of goods and services donated from area merchants and more.

All net proceeds from each WellsFest go to the beneficiary chosen for that year. In addition to providing funds for a beneficiary’s project, the festival provides the beneficiary publicity and promotion. Learn more about Wells United Methodist Church at wellschurch.org and WellsFest at wellsfest.org.

Becoming a WellsFest Beneficiary

The WellsFest Beneficiary Selection Committee seeks applications from qualified 501(c)(3) social service nonprofit organizations. The application form includes minimum criteria for an organization to be considered. A chosen beneficiary cannot apply again within five years after being awarded WellsFest funds.

The application deadline (phase 1) for WellsFest 2027 is **Wednesday, Nov. 25, 2026**. After the selection of the beneficiary has been announced, the beneficiary begins to partner with the leaders of the WellsFest Committee, which plans and conducts the festival events.

Submitting a WellsFest application means the applicant agrees that, if selected as the beneficiary, (1) Funds received from WellsFest will be spent **only** for the purpose stated in the proposal; and (2) The organization will partner with Wells Church to promote, conduct and otherwise support WellsFest.

WellsFest Beneficiary Application Phase 1

This application process is in two phases. Phase 1 requires that you complete Step 1 through Step 4 and submit for review by the selection committee. Please follow the directions in each step of the application and limit your answers to the space provided. Do not attach additional pages other than required documents or those indicated as optional below. The application is fillable and typed applications are required.

Step 1:

- Has the IRS granted your organization the status of 501(c)(3) nonprofit? ☐ YES ☐ NO
- Has your organization been in operation for more than five years? ☐ YES ☐ NO
- Does your organization serve vulnerable persons in the city of Jackson? ☐ YES ☐ NO
- Will your organization assist in organizing and conducting WellsFest events? ☐ YES ☐ NO
- If selected as this year's WellsFest beneficiary, will your organization use the awarded funding only for the purpose(s) that your application proposes? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If you answered “NO” to any of the above questions, your organization is NOT ELIGIBLE to be a WellsFest beneficiary. Otherwise, proceed to Step 2.

Step 2:

Please provide the following information.

Organization's Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Physical Address (if different) _____

Contact Person and Title _____

Email Address _____ Website _____

Best phone to call _____ Best time to call _____

What geographic area does your organization serve? _____

How often does your Board of Directors meet? _____

Estimated number of people your proposed project/program will serve _____

Step 3:

Please provide the requested information in the space provided.

1. Brief title of the project/program you propose _____

2. Concisely describe your organization's history, purpose, mission and objectives. Include a description of the client population you serve. You may attach a flyer or brochure.

3. Describe the project or program for which you will use WellsFest funds, including the issues/needs it will address, the goals, and how progress or success will be measured. The objectives and activities of the proposed project/program must be consistent with the values of Wells Church. See wellschurch.org to learn about the history and mission of the church.

4. Identify key ways participating clients and the community will benefit from your project/program.
5. If you are proposing to use WellsFest funding to expand an existing project or program or to launch a new one, describe how your organization will sustain the project or program.
6. How will your organization assist in planning, publicizing and conducting WellsFest events in the upcoming year? Provide as much detail as you can. For example, estimate how many associates would help in the set-up and take-down of the festival, volunteer in activities or serve in other capacities.
7. Would your organization be willing to volunteer to assist in future WellsFests? _____

Step 4:

Attach a copy of the IRS letter that confirms your organization is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Submit your application via email as one PDF (including your 501(c)(3) letter) to wellsfest@wellschurch.org.

Reminder: Make sure your application fully addresses all requirements and that you are specific and concise in your answers. *Incomplete applications will not be considered and providing false information will be cause for denial.* **Applications can be submitted before the deadline but they must reach wellsfest@wellschurch.org before midnight on Nov. 25, 2026.** You will be notified of receipt of the application by email.

The selection committee will meet on **Dec. 6, 2026**, to review and discuss all applications.

If you are chosen as a finalist, you will be notified by phone or email on **Dec. 7, 2026**, and will advance to Phase 2 of the process. **You will then be required to submit the information listed in phase 2 (following page) as one PDF to wellsfest@wellschurch.org before midnight on Dec. 14, 2026.**

Thank you for your work to enhance the quality of life of vulnerable persons. We at Wells Church send you our best wishes for great success in all of your initiatives.

----- END OF PHASE 1 -----

WellsFest Beneficiary Application Phase 2 required for finalists only

Please submit the following items to wellsfest@wellschurch.org as one pdf before midnight on Dec. 14, 2026

1. A budget itemizing how your organization intends to use WellsFest funds. Funds may not be used for ongoing salaries, overhead, or to build a cash reserve.
2. A copy of your most recent IRS Form 990 or Form 990-EZ (Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax). If your organization is not required to file Form 990, you may substitute a copy of your annual report. This report must include your income and expenses for your most recent fiscal year and must also summarize your primary activities.
3. A listing of your current board of directors (including secretary and treasurer).
4. Optional: Up to three (3) letters of support. If you submit three letters, one must be from a client, one from a benefactor (individual or group), and one from a board member or a partner organization.
5. Optional: You may attach a PDF flyer or brochure about your organization.

Phase 2 information will be reviewed by the Selection Committee on **Dec. 16, 2026**.

After review, the committee might ask your organization to submit additional information or host an **on-site visit** for the committee members. We expect any on-site visits will be conducted in early January, targeting **Jan. 4-8, 2027**. Final decision and award of our 2027 Beneficiary Designee should be complete by **Jan. 15, 2027, and the designee will be notified shortly thereafter**.

Thank you for your work to enhance the quality of life of vulnerable persons. We at Wells Church send you our best wishes for great success in all of your initiatives.