



CPA Funding Application Form

City of Worcester

Submitted On:

May 9, 2025, 09:50AM EDT

Project Name	The Dr. Robert & Esther Goddard Center for Inspiration
Project Location and/or Address	1 Tallawanda Drive, Worcester MA 01602
Project Lead Organization (or Individual if Applicable)	The Wonder Mission, Inc.
Legal Status of the Organization	
Current Property Owner (if Different from the Applicant)	
Brief Project Description	The Wonder Mission will restore and preserve the house that was the birthplace of Dr. Robert Goddard, known as "the father of modern rocketry", and will develop it into a inter-active learning environment accessible to local students and educators.
Project Contact Information	Charles Slatkin [REDACTED]
What CPA category does this project fall under? (Check All that Apply)	Historic Resources
What activity are you proposing to do in this category? (Check All that Apply)	Acquire Create Preserve Support Rehabilitate / Restore
What is the project budget?	\$178,310
How much are you requesting in CPA funding?	\$178,310
Historical Resource Projects: Have you received a Positive Determination of Local Historic Significance from the Worcester Historical Commission?	This project does not require a Determination of Local Historic Significance
Are you requesting an expedited review process for your project? The CPC shall consider an expedited timeline for review (i.e., a Special Application) only under certain circumstances. See the	No

Application Guidance document (linked below) for more information.	
Please briefly describe your project.	The Wonder Mission project has a two-fold purpose: To restore and preserve the Worcester birthplace of Dr. Robert Goddard, "the father of modern rocketry"; to honor his legacy by inspiring the minds and imaginations of young people through an array of interactive displays and exhibits that will stimulate interest in space exploration and Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM). These aspects will be developed simultaneously. The former Goddard house was acquired in 2021 by Charles Slatkin, himself a visionary in the field of audio-visuals. Ownership was transferred to the Wonder Mission in January 2025. The building now requires new roofing, plumbing and electrical upgrades, and exterior painting. Once completed, the Goddard Center will collaborate with Worcester and area schools to host on-site tours and learning opportunities for students and teachers. A 100th anniversary celebration will occur on 3/16/2026 to commemorate his first successful rocket launch.
What permissions, permits and plans will be necessary to carry out this project, and what is the status of their acquisition?	Permits will be sought for lead remediation, plumbing and electrical upgrades.
Do you foresee any delays in acquiring these permissions within the next 6 months? If yes, please explain, otherwise, type N/A.	No
What is the desired start and end date of this project?	Renovations are expected to begin late summer 2025, with completion by March 16, 2026, to coincide with the 100th anniversary of Dr. Goddard's first successful rocket launch.
Please attach a Timeline for the project.	Goddard Center Project Timeline.docx
Please upload a complete project budget (.xlsx or .pdf) that includes the source of the funding for each line item. CPA funds can ONLY be used on CPA eligible project elements. Please make sure to be specific about the use of all CPA monies requested.	Goddard project budget estimates.xlsx
What is the status of the match funding identified in the budget?	The Wonder Mission Inc. will be applying for a Home Equity Line of Credit (HELOC) to cover up-front project renovations and upgrades.
Please upload commitment letters and/or funding	

agreements demonstrating that match funding is in place.	Goddard commitment letter.docx
Please explain why CPA funding is needed for this project. If CPA is the only proposed funding source for this project, please explain why.	March 16th, 2026, will mark the 100th anniversary of Dr. Robert Goddard's first successful rocket launch, which served as the genesis for space exploration as we know it today. Funding is requested for the initial restoration costs to preserve the birthplace of Dr. Robert Goddard. A capital campaign will subsequently raise funds to maintain the Center.
Please describe the experience of the project manager or project management team in completing a project like this one. Please include examples of similar projects pursued in the past, and why they are relevant.	Charles Slatkin is the project manager. He is a graduate of Clark University (1974) and has decades of experience in multi-media creation and development. He founded the production companies WOW Inc. and Wave, whose clients have included PBS, NOVA, the Discovery Channel, the George W. Bush Presidential Library and the Syracuse Museum of Science. He has served as president of the Kettle Brook Lofts & Condo Association that oversaw the rehab of 70,000 square feet of mixed-use space in Cherry Valley. Philip Niddrie is also on the Wonder Mission project team. He served for years in the City of Worcester's Development Office and played a key role in the restoration and preservation of the historic Stearns Tavern, constructed in 1812 and which was moved in 2016 from its location on Park Ave. to Mill Street, adjacent to Coes Pond.
Please describe the financial position of the organization and its ability to cover the upfront costs of this project. CPA funding is provided on a reimbursement basis.	The Wonder Mission is in the process of securing a HELOC to cover initial project renovations. It is planning a capital campaign to cover ongoing costs to maintain the Goddard Center, and to develop a range of interactive learning tools that will be featured in the Center. Cultivation meetings have been held and are ongoing with donor prospects, including NASA, the American Institutes of Aeronautics and Astronautics, and prominent individuals in Worcester business and philanthropy.
How will this resource/property/building be maintained in the future?	The Wonder Mission will rely upon paid and pro-bono professionals to maintain the building and property.
Please describe how this project/program will benefit Worcester residents in general, as well as specific groups that will benefit from the project.	The Wonder Mission will collaborate with local public and private schools, colleges and universities and beyond to do on-campus presentations highlighting Dr. Goddard's work as a space pioneer. Students and educators will have access to the Goddard Center to view and study documents and inter-active audio and visual displays designed to stimulate interest in STEM. This project has been heartily endorse by the superintendents of the Worcester Public Schools and Diocese of Worcester School Dept.
Please identify which of the Community Priorities identified in the Community Preservation Plan align with this project (check all that apply).	PRIORITY 1: Increase accessibility to historic resources, open space, parks, and in community housing.
Please describe how this project aligns with the above	Students, educators and community groups will be afforded access to the Goddard Center to see historic artifacts created and designed

Community Priorities.	by Dr. Goddard that propelled generations of other scientists and researchers into space exploration and their many subsequent and wondrous achievements, foremost among them delivering man from Earth to the Moon. After Dr. Goddard's passing in 1945, his wife Esther devoted years to collecting and preserving multitudes of documents vital to her husband's research and experiments. Many of those artifacts will be displayed in the next several months at the Worcester Museum, Clark University and WPI, and more permanently at 1 Tallawanda Drive. Here students and educators will also be introduced to electronic storytelling, robotic hosts, and the "Galactic Flyer" that will combine simple body gestures with ultrasonic audio to allow visitors to "fly off the Earth" to explore the universe.
Historic Resource Category Goals	GOAL 1: Acquire and restore historic buildings in danger of demolition. GOAL 2: Promote adaptive reuse or deconstruction for historical preservation. GOAL 3: Preserve, digitize, and archive historic records. GOAL 4: Preserve underrepresented stories.
Open Space and Recreation Category Goals	This project does not align with any of these Category Goals.
Community Housing Category Goals	This project does not align with any of these Category Goals.
Please describe how this project aligns with the above Category Goals.	When Charles Slatkin acquired the property at Tallawanda Drive in 2021 it was slated for demolition, with potential new construction of rental properties. He was determined to preserve the birthplace of Dr. Goddard and to develop it into a center that would inspire this and future generations of young people in the advancement of STEM. Ownership was transferred to the Wonder Mission in January 2025. It is devoted to preserving artifacts that were central to Dr. Goddard's experiments. Using dynamic audio and visual platforms it will bring to life Dr. Goddard's pioneering achievements. The Wonder Mission will pay tribute to the remarkable role he played in modern space conquests and will render the Center a source of immense civic pride. The Center will become the origin for the "National Space Trail" that will link via the internet local sites of relevance in Dr. Goddard's life (e.g. South H.S., Clark U., WPI) and span the country to include places of significance in space flight.
Does your project align with any other City or Regional Plans? Please be specific. See the City of Worcester website to view local plans.	This project aligns with City of Worcester plans for the preservation and restoration of historic properties.
Does your project have community support? Please describe outreach efforts for this project.	The project has received enthusiastic support from the superintendents of the Worcester Public Schools, Diocese of Worcester School Dept., Congressman James McGovern, Preservation Worcester, and the Webster Square Neighborhood Association. Meetings have been held with directors of the Worcester Area Chamber of Commerce, Worcester Business Development

	Corp., Clark University and WPI leadership. Charles Slatkin has also invited neighborhood residents to private tours of the house and property.
Please upload any letters of support.	WPS letter of support for Wonder Mission 5-1-2025.pdf David Perda letter of support 4-29-2025.pdf
Is there anything else you want the CPC to know about your project?	The "Space Race" that occurred more than a half century ago began with the launch of a rocket by Worcester's native son on 3/16/1926. As we approach the 100th anniversary of that historic event his vision of multi-stage rockets, interstellar travel, and long-term space exploration have been realized. The Wonder Mission will give Worcester and the Goddard birthplace its rightly deserved place on the map, as a living memorial and resource center that will inspire young people of this generation.