2024 Community Grant Program for Project Support Applicant Guidelines

The Community Grant Program is our signature program, awarding close to $2 million annually across five strategic focus areas with both discrete project/programming and general operating support. The program is designed to be responsive and flexible and utilizes many trust-based philanthropic principles. We strive for this approach to take less total time for applicants, be more interactive, and provide a different method for storytelling.

Timeline:

	Arts, Basic Needs & Economic Opportunity	Youth/Families & Health
Information Session	April 18, 9 a.m.	
Letter of Intent Opens	April 1	April 15
Letter of Intent Closes	June 14	June 28
Notification of 2nd round	June 28	July 15
Project Conversations	July 8 - August 16	July 22 - August 23
Decisions	September 6	September 6
Payment	September 19	September 19
Grantee Report	Group debriefs scheduled at a later date	

Areas of Support

Requests should be to support a project/program that is both highly aligned in at least one of the strategies listed in our focus areas and the project/program or organization should be able to meaningfully address work being done in the lenses listed.

Focus Areas

1. **Arts & Creativity:** Building and supporting a diverse and strong arts & culture ecosystem where all belong.

   Strategies include:
   a. Work that engages, celebrates and strengthens our communities.
   b. Projects that are intersectional in nature and promote arts and non-arts partnerships. (Previous Creative Intersection grantees are encouraged to apply.)

2. **Basic Needs:** Working to ensure all residents of our community have food and shelter.

   Strategies include:
   a. Expanding access to SNAP & HIP.
   b. Projects focused on providing wrap around support services.
   c. Program that increase shelter access.

3. **Economic Opportunity**
   a. English Language Learning programs
   b. Job Training & Financial Literacy programs

4. **Health & Wellbeing:** Strengthening the systems that ensure those from historically excluded populations have equitable access to healthcare.
   Strategies include:
   a. Expanding a culturally-responsive healthcare workforce.
   b. Expanding access to care.
   c. Improving prenatal care/healthy pregnancies.
5. **Youth & Families:** Ensuring families have what they need to thrive, and that young people have access to critical supports and meaningful experiences.

   Strategies Include:
   a. Increasing access to quality early childhood care.
   b. Meaningful out-of-school experiences.

Lenses

In addition to the focus areas, we also strive to be in relationship with projects and organizations who are on a journey to examine, learn and pivot in the areas of equity, community voice and disrupting systems. We look for honest and authentic reflections vs. advanced responses.

1. **Equity:** We believe equity is one part of racial justice, and thus we include in our approach work that addresses root causes of inequities, not just their manifestations.
2. **Community Voice:** Organizations and projects with strong community voice co-create and lead programming together, create structures in partnership, or are led by those more impacted by the issue.
3. **Disrupting Systems:** We are interested in being in relationship with organizations looking closely at ways to move our community to a more equitable place by understanding root causes of inequities and engaging in partnerships, coalitions and advocacy work that results in changed systems.

Eligibility:

- Types of Organizations
  - 501c3 nonprofits, or any entity operating under a fiscal sponsorship of a 501c3.
  - Collaboratives and coalitions with a fiscal sponsor and identified project lead.
  - Houses of worship running community-serving programs that are not faith based and do not proselytize.
  - Large multiservice institutions applying for well-aligned discrete projects.
- Geographic Location & Service Area
  - Based in Worcester County and serve primarily its residents.
  - Not based in Worcester County but have a meaningful physical presence.
  - Providing an unduplicated service in Worcester County and can demonstrate they have authentic partnerships and relationships with local stakeholders.
- Ineligible Organizations & Individuals:
  - Businesses
  - Government organizations or municipalities
  - Individuals (scholarships, tuition, direct aid etc…)

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- o Projects occurring in classrooms during school time as part of the academic program/curriculum.
- o Organizations requesting support for capital projects/campaigns.

Scope & Requirements:

- o Grant range is $2,500 - $25,000.
- o Partial grants can be awarded.
- o Support can be for a pilot, programmatic expansion, and/or support for ongoing program.
- o Organizations should be in good financial standing with an intact governance structure.

Selection Criteria:

Teams of Foundation staff and community volunteers will assess Letters of Intent for baseline satisfaction of eligibility criteria and alignment with focus areas. Applications that satisfy criteria will be invited for a second-round conversation and measure on the following:

- Feasibility: the budget and proposed work match and are doable within our grant range.
- The level of access and barrier reduction for residents of Worcester County that is created.
- How much of a creative or innovative solution to a pressing community need(s) the project or program is.
- Measurable and manageable goals and outcomes that are aligned with one or more of our expressed focus areas.
- Organizational commitment in the areas of equity, community voice and systems disruption.
- Are sound organizations with strong financial and governance functions.

Foundation Support & Feedback:

- Before You Submit
  - o Reach out to a member of our program team for coaching, conversation and/or an application review.
- Applications Under Review
  - o Know that you will be notified each step of the way regardless of the outcome.
  - o Every application we receive undergoes a fair and thorough review.
- After Decisions
  - o Program team staff are happy to have follow up conversations. We can share themes and feedback on how your application faired through the process.

Links:

- Guidelines
- Information Session Registration
- Application
- Past Grantees