



SOMOS COMUNIDAD FUND

2022 GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

We invite you to consider applying for funding through the Somos Comunidad Fund at Grand Rapids Community Foundation. Guided by the voices of our Latinx* communities, we seek to reimagine philanthropy for ourselves. We recognize the vibrancy of our diverse cultures and the philanthropy that exists within our communities. This fund will serve to uplift and build on our legacy of giving, invest in efforts which allow for the transformation of Latinx communities by determining our own future, and untap our potential to move our Latinx communities forward. The Somos Comunidad Fund launched in 2021, and this is its first competitive grant round. As support for Somos Comunidad grows, we look forward to being able to increase the available grant funds in the future. Your grant application must be submitted online through [Grant Central](#) by December 23, 2022.

*While we honor the ways our community self-identifies, choosing to use the term Latinx allows for us to expand beyond binary gender roles and nationalities to be inclusive of individuals' whole identity.

Included in these guidelines, you will find:

- 2022 Grant Application Timeline
- Focus Areas
- Eligibility
- Submission Process
- Application Questions
- Reporting Requirements
- Resources and Contact Information
- Background and Context

TIMELINE SNAPSHOT





A more detailed timeline, including a link to the community listening report and registration for the application information sessions in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), is available at GRFoundation.org/SomosComunidad.

FOCUS AREAS

Up to \$75,000 is available for this round of funding. The Somos Comunidad Fund is seeking proposals serving Latinx communities that:

- Reduce barriers (including documentation status, language, transportation, etc.) to accessing education and job training, legal services, physical and mental healthcare, and basic needs such as food, clothing, and housing for Latinx communities, especially those who are undocumented, or create alternatives through mutual aid spaces
- Offer safe spaces and development opportunities for youth, including after-school and summer programs, tutoring, job shadowing and internships, and self-expression through the arts
- Build or extend Latinx-led social or cultural organizations, groups, projects, or activities that strengthen support networks, provide a sense of belonging, and/or celebrate Latinx communities, particularly through the arts
- Community organizing and/or advocacy efforts addressing immigration reform, community safety, gun violence, substance-use, and/or environmental justice

While consideration will be given to all eligible applications, priority will be given to proposals that:

- Come from Latinx-led organizations or community groups (defined as a majority in three or more of the following categories: founder, executive director, internal leadership team, staff, volunteers, and board of directors)
- Include Latinx communities who will be impacted in the creation, implementation, and evaluation of the proposed programming or services
- Demonstrate specific efforts to serve undocumented Latinx communities and/or Latinx youth
- Include collaborative partnerships among multiple organizations

ELIGIBILITY

Community organizations and groups, whether they are 501c3s or are willing to obtain a fiscal sponsor (also called a fiduciary, which is an organization with the legal structure to accept grant funds on your behalf) and government entities (including schools) may apply for grants for programs that benefit Latinx communities in Kent County. If you would need a fiscal sponsor to be eligible and do not currently have one, reach out to us for support as soon as possible. This does not disqualify you from submitting a grant application. Applications from religious organizations for non-religious purposes will be considered. Eligible organizations do not discriminate in hiring staff or providing services on the basis of race, gender, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, age, national origin or disability.

Proposed projects or programs should begin on or after February 1, 2023. Applications for projects up to two years in length (through December 31, 2024) are welcome. Applications will be accepted for up to \$75,000, including for collaborative projects. They will be reviewed in two categories as determined by request size: (a) applications under \$10,000 and (b) applications of \$10,000 - \$75,000.



SUBMISSION PROCESS

Your grant application must be completed online through [Grant Central](#). If you (or your fiscal sponsor) have not used Grant Central before, please contact us as soon as possible so we can ensure you have access to the portal when you are ready to apply. Complete applications require the submission of a project budget (reach out to us if you need help developing this) and brief description of how the requested funds will be used, racial and gender demographic information for clients, staff, board, and volunteers of the applying organization (or of the community group doing the work, not the fiscal sponsor), and responses to the questions below. Please note that additional information may be requested after committee application review. You may choose to complete a traditional written application, or to submit a video in English or Spanish.

We recognize that character and word limits create time-intensive labor for applicants required to reduce or feel pressured to stretch their responses to fit. We also recognize that there are those who appreciate some level of direction, and want to be considerate of our volunteer committee members reviewing each proposal. As such, the word counts associated with each question are suggestions- we simply encourage you to explain your work as clearly and concisely as possible.

If you choose a video submission, please state the application question you are addressing before giving your response, and note that you will still need to submit a budget, demographic information, and respond to Question 1 in Grant Central. Videos for applications under \$10,000 may be up to five minutes in length, and for more than \$10,000 up to eight minutes.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 1)** Grand Rapids Community Foundation is committed to creating a community that is working to eliminate inequities and is anti-racist. We seek partners that share in this commitment and demonstrate practices that disrupt the conditions that hold racism in place.
 - a)** Is anyone excluded from services, employment or volunteer participation based on their age, ability, economic circumstance, education, race, criminal record, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religion, spiritual beliefs, marital status, national origin or veteran status? *(Yes or No)*
 - b)** Does your organization have an equity statement that communicates your pursuit of anti-racist practices and aspirations toward equity? *(Yes or No)*
 - c)** Is your organization led by people of color (defined as having people of color as a majority in three or more of the categories below)? *(Yes or No)*

If Yes was selected above, identify the categories in which people of color are a majority at your organization: founder, executive director, leadership team, board of directors, volunteers, staff. *(check boxes)*
 - d)** Is your organization Latinx-led (defined as having a Latinx majority in three or more of the categories below)? *(Yes or No)*

If Yes was selected above, identify the Latinx-majority categories at your organization: founder, executive director, leadership team, board of directors, volunteers, staff. *(check boxes)*



- 2) Describe the proposed project or program, including which focus area it will address, specific Latinx communities served, and timeline. (*appx 300 words*)
- 3) How do you define success for this proposal, and what signals will confirm you have accomplished your goals? (*appx 200 words*)
- 4) How do you incorporate the values of diversity, equity and inclusion into the operations of your organization? For example, do you include the perspectives of the communities you serve in program design and delivery, or do you have specific equity policies or hiring practices that inform your work? (*appx 200 words*)
- 5) Is there any other information or feedback you would like to share with us? (*appx 150 words*)

Applications requesting \$10,000 - \$75,000 require responses to the following additional questions:

- 6) How does this proposal disrupt the root causes or underlying conditions (policies, practices, institutions, culture and power) that hold inequitable outcomes for Latinx communities in place? If it does not do so, in what other ways does your organization address this? (*appx 200 words*)
- 7) How have Latinx community members been engaged in creating the proposed project or program, and what leadership role will they play throughout implementation and evaluation? (*appx 150 words*)
- 8) We believe that collaboration strengthens work through the diversity of thought, creativity, and relationship building it facilitates. Please describe the roles of your partners, and if they are confirmed or tentative for the current proposal. If you do not currently collaborate with other groups or organizations, please share why? (*appx 150 words*)

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

We are open to hearing about the work of your grant in a way that feels comfortable to you. You may choose to complete a traditional written report or to participate in a 30-minute meeting with our Program Officer and/or Somos Comunidad Fund committee members within two months of the end of your grant period. Both options would require submission of a final budget through Grant Central, sharing the successes and lessons learned throughout the grant period, and feedback about the process as a whole. We recognize that by the end of your grant, conditions may be different than when you applied, and your definition of success may have shifted. We will be happy to hear those updates as part of our shared learning. You would also be invited to share photos, videos, or other visual materials if they are available as a way for us to celebrate and amplify your critical community work. To build transparency and community accountability, summaries of your work will be made available throughout our ongoing engagement processes.

NEED HELP?

We want to ensure that you feel supported in the process of applying for grant funding at Grand Rapids Community Foundation. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us!

- For questions related to the content of your proposal, eligibility requirements, or identifying a fiscal sponsor, contact Erika VanDyke, program officer, at 616.454.1751 or EVanDyke@GRFoundation.org.



- For technical assistance with the online application, call Keri Jaynes, grants manager, at 616.284.4911 or email KJaynes@GRFoundation.org.
- For more information about Grand Rapids Community Foundation, please visit GRFoundation.org.

HISTORY and CONTEXT

Somos Comunidad Fund knows that building deep relationships with communities most impacted by inequity must be at the core of our work, and seeks their guidance in identifying and implementing relevant solutions to address critical issues. In the summer of 2022, we began what will be ongoing engagement with a variety of folks in local Latinx communities, which informed the current request for proposals and application process. These voices reaffirmed the need for us to center work led by Latinx communities including Latinx youth, as well as to support community groups, projects and movements that exist outside of traditional nonprofit structures and organizations.

Somos Comunidad Fund operates from a belief that Latinx communities are not a monolith. In the United States, people are impacted by oppressive systems based on race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language ability, documentation status, disability, class, age and other forms of discrimination that intersect in ways as unique as each individual (learn more about intersectionality [here](#)). Put another way, the experiences and challenges of an undocumented, white-passing Latino might be very different from those of a queer Afro-Latina from Puerto Rico, even though both might identify as Latinx. There are many groups and organizations already serving Latinx communities, and we seek to partner with those that align with the goals and values of both Somos Comunidad Fund and Grand Rapids Community Foundation as a whole. We recognize that our resources are limited, and we believe that meaningful community change can only be achieved through strong collaboration with organizations, community groups, and individuals representing a variety of intersecting identities.

Our work is also informed by a volunteer advisory committee that leads decision making for the Somos Comunidad Fund, including recommendations for grant awards. This committee is made up of Latinx community members representing a range of ages, country of origin, and life and professional experience. You can view the list of committee members on [our website](#), and connect with us if you are interested in serving in the future.

We expect that our grantmaking approach will evolve as we continue to learn and grow, and we know that there will be moments where we fall short of our goals. We commit to actively and regularly seeking feedback on ways for us to improve our practice and better serve our community. Opportunities for engagement with Somos Comunidad Fund throughout this grant cycle are outlined in the timeline above.

Grand Rapids Community Foundation North Star

For West Michigan to grow and prosper, we must make sure that everyone can apply their talents and creativity to fuel our future. It is only by connecting across perspectives and overcoming inequities that we can build and sustain an inclusive economy and thriving community.