

# OUR BLACK LEGACY FUND

## 2024 GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

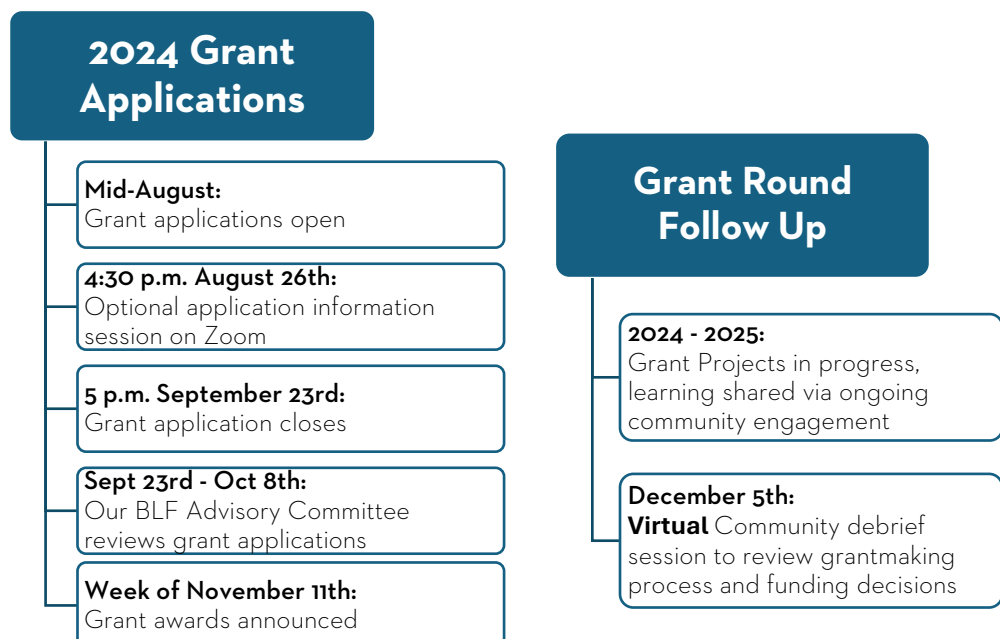
### REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

We invite you to consider applying for funding available through the Black Legacy Fund at Grand Rapids Community Foundation. As Our Black Legacy Fund charter states - “Black Legacy Fund builds on a legacy of giving in the Black community. The fund exists as a demonstration of self-determination for Black Grand Rapids to support programs, leaders, and organizations to increase opportunity and wealth; to provide a platform for large systemic inequities to be recognized and addressed; to deepen and grow relationships and social capital; and to support the actualization of and access for Black peoples in greater Grand Rapids.” Your grant application must be submitted online through our [grant portal](#) by **Monday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 5pm.**

Included in these guidelines, you will find:

- 2024 Grant Application Timeline
- Background and Context
- Focus Areas
- Eligibility
- Submission Process
- Application Questions
- Evaluation Criteria
- Reporting Requirements
- Resources and Contact Information

### TIMELINE SNAPSHOT





A more detailed timeline, including a link to the community listening report and [registration](#) for the application information session, is available at [GRFoundation.org/BlackLegacyFund](https://GRFoundation.org/BlackLegacyFund).

## BACKGROUND and CONTEXT

Our Black Legacy Fund is one of over 850 funds at the Grand Rapids Community Foundation. As a Field of Interest fund, this allows donors to select a specific area of interest to support with their donations. These areas of interest can include the environment, arts, children, or health. The foundation invests the assets from these funds in partners who share their commitment to becoming anti-racist, are led by people of color, and are rooted in the community. Black Legacy Fund knows that building deep relationships with Black communities must be at the core of our work and seeks their guidance in identifying and implementing relevant solutions to address critical issues, such as recognizing the need to find **time, space, and resources for the community to heal from generational traumas** rooted in historical systems of exclusion. In the summer of 2022, we engaged with a variety of folks in local Black communities, which informed the current request for proposals and application process. These voices reaffirmed the need for us to center work led by Black communities, including Black youth, and to support community groups, projects, and movements that exist outside of traditional nonprofit structures and organizations.

Black Legacy Fund knows that there is much richness and diversity within Black communities. We know that within the African diaspora, there are folks impacted by oppressive systems based on race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language ability, documentation status, disability, class, age, religion, and other forms of discrimination that intersect in ways as unique as each individual (learn more about intersectionality here ). We seek to partner with community groups and organizations that align with the goals and values of both the Black Legacy Fund and Grand Rapids Community Foundation, whose North Star is “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.

While we recognize that our resources are limited, we seek to work with groups and organizations most impacted by oppressive systems and honor the various lived experiences of Black communities in Kent County.

Our work is also informed by a volunteer advisory committee that leads decision-making for the Black Legacy Fund, including recommendations for grant awards. This committee is made up of a diverse group of Black community members. 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 when 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 Black Legacy Fund throughout this grant cycle are outlined in the timeline above.

## FOCUS AREAS

Up to \$400,000 in total (not per project) will be awarded for proposals that uplift Black brilliance and improve Black quality of life through:

- Black Health & Wellness through navigation and access to mental health services and supports, including opportunities for rest, respite and wellness, and individual and community healing from generational trauma
- Black safety and justice - Community organizing and/or advocacy efforts for issues disproportionately impacting Black communities
- Black Youth - Uplifting and supporting Black Youth through youth-led programming, initiatives and/or events.
- Black Leadership – Supporting development by and for Black communities, including Black youth
- Black Wealth - Opportunities for Black wealth building, including the creation of mutual aid spaces, support for entrepreneurship, and/or career exploration or job training for youth
- Black Employment – Creating professional opportunities for the Black communities to be in/enter the technology field, and supporting workforce development
- Black Arts & Creativity - Creating or supporting Black-led social or cultural institutions and enterprises that strengthen support networks, provide a sense of belonging, and/or celebrate Black communities

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

- Come from Black-led organizations or community groups
- Center Black communities, including Black youth, in the co-creation and co-implementation of proposed programming or services
- Include collaborative partnerships among multiple organizations

## ELIGIBILITY

Black-led (defined as a majority in two or more of the following categories: founder, executive director, internal leadership team, and/or board members) and Black-serving community organizations and groups, whether they are 501(c)(3)'s or applying with a [fiduciary](#), and government entities (including schools) may apply for grants for programs that benefit Black communities in Kent County. Eligible organizations do not discriminate in hiring staff or providing services based on race, gender, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, age, national origin, or disability. Applications from religious organizations for non-religious purposes will be considered.

**Proposed projects or programs should begin on or after November 1, 2024.** Applicants are encouraged to apply for up to two years of programming (2024 and 2025), as additional opportunities to apply for Black Legacy funding are



not expected to be offered over the next two years. As an example – grant requests expected to average from \$10,000 to \$40,000 annually can be requested at \$20,000 - \$80,000 total.

Applications will be accepted for up to \$400,000, including for collaborative projects. They will be reviewed in two categories as determined by request size: (a) applications under \$50,000 and (b) applications of \$50,000-\$400,000. **Please note that funding is limited and a total of \$400,000 will be granted.** This means that not all eligible projects will receive funding and some projects may receive partial funding.

## SUBMISSION PROCESS

Your grant application must be completed online through our grant portal. All applicants need to create a new account and review their Organization Profile, which requires a listing of board members, organization description, primary contact, as well as current and last year's annual budget amounts. Applications require a brief project description, project start and end dates, a project budget, racial and gender demographic information for clients, staff, board, and volunteers, and a total number for each group. Applications also require uploaded financial documentation. Examples of what you can provide include internal financial statements (balance sheet, cash flow statement, etc.), Form 990, or audited financial statements. You may submit a video to address the narrative application questions. If you choose a video submission, please state the application question you are addressing before giving your response. Video submissions may be up to six minutes in length. Please note that additional information may be requested after committee application review.

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.

## 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 who 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. Is your organization Black-led (defined as having Black folks as a majority in at least two of the four categories below)? (Yes or No)



Select the categories in which Black folks are a majority at your organization or group: founder, executive director, internal leadership team, board of directors (checkboxes)

- 2) Describe the proposed project or program, including which focus area it will address, specific Black 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 are the people most affected by your project included in the leadership, design, implementation, and evaluation of your project? (appx 200 words)
- 5) If the proposal is not fully funded, will you carry out the project? If so, where will you find the funding? (appx 300 words)

**The following questions must be completed for applications requesting \$50,000 - \$400,000:**

- 6) How does this project address the issues that prevent Black communities from flourishing and experiencing joy? (appx 200 words)
- 7) We know that often in this work, community and the relationships we build with one another are what help us get through. We all hold a collective responsibility to take care of each other. What existing relationships or partnerships are important to your project? (appx 750 words)
- 8) Our name, Black Legacy Fund, recognizes the importance of legacy and honoring those who came before us and our future generations. In an ideal world with unlimited access to resources, what would your work look like in 5-10 years? What legacy do you want to leave? (appx 750 words)

**Optional Question:** Is there any other information or feedback you would like to share with us?

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Black Legacy Fund Advisory Committee will use a [scoring rubric](#) to evaluate the applications. The following criteria will be considered: focus area alignment, impact, representation, feasibility, and past partnerships. Additionally, requests of \$50,000 or more will be evaluated on how they disrupt root causes and demonstrate collective responsibility. **While high scoring will be considered, it does not guarantee funding.** Funding decisions also consider budget constraints, alignment with strategic priorities, and overall impact.



## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

We seek to minimize extractive reporting burdens on our grant partners. You may complete a traditional written report or participate in a 30-minute meeting with a program officer and/or Our Black Legacy Fund committee members within two months of the end of your grant period. Both options require the submission of a final budget through our grant portal. Written and meeting reports include sharing the successes and lessons learned throughout the grant period (recognizing that conditions may be different than when you applied and that your definition of success may have shifted) and feedback about the grant process as a whole. You will 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 Chantal Pasag, program officer, at 616.284.4924 or [CPasag@grfoundation.org](mailto:CPasag@grfoundation.org)
- For technical assistance with the online application, call Keri Jaynes, grants manager, at 616.284.4911 or email [KJaynes@GRFoundation.org](mailto:KJaynes@GRFoundation.org)
- For more information about Grand Rapids Community Foundation and Our Black Legacy Fund, please visit [GRFoundation.org/BlackLegacyFund](http://GRFoundation.org/BlackLegacyFund).