

Fund for Community Good

Pre-Application Guidelines

OVERVIEW

With our Fund for Community Good and Field of Interest funds, Grand Rapids Community Foundation partners with organizations who share our commitment to becoming actively anti-racist, are led by people of color, and are rooted in community. We are drawn to partnerships that:

- Address the intersections of racial, social, and economic justice
- Seek to change systems by shifting social conditions that maintain inequity
- Understand the systemic barriers to racial equity their constituents face and reflect that in their goals, strategies, and work
- Create access for people who have historically been excluded from opportunities
- Are led by people of color and have board, staff, and leadership at all levels that reflect the people most impacted by disparities in our community
- Engage those most affected by disparities in developing and implementing strategies to shift power and resources
- Focus on amplifying community voice and building power within communities experiencing inequities
- Actively collaborate with others to make systems in West Michigan equitable and inclusive
- Understand that systems change is long and ongoing; therefore, projects that are one-time events or occurrences will not be considered

For a list of frequently asked questions and additional information about grant partnership, please visit our [website](#). Below, find some context to help guide you through each of the pre-application questions.

PRE-APPLICATION QUESTIONS + CONTEXT

1. Which of the priority areas will the project address?

Context to consider while answering this question: Below are descriptions of the Community Foundation's six priority areas. While we know many of these priorities intersect, select the option that best represents the core of your proposal.

- **Education:** We strive for educational equity, where race, ethnicity, and first-generation status are not predictive of post-secondary enrollment, persistence, and degree or credential attainment.
- **Health:** We invest in culturally effective solutions that lead to equitable health outcomes and well-being. We consider other social determinants to impact health at a root cause level.
- **Neighborhoods:** We seek partners who protect and honor culture and legacy in neighborhoods. We invest in projects that build power and amplify the resident voice. Project examples include safe and affordable housing and crime reduction.
- **Arts + Culture Engagement:** We invest in opportunities that seek to sustain arts and cultural opportunities that advance equity and are led by or primarily reach communities of color. We also invest in leaders and networks who inspire, grow and connect movements aimed at advancing equity.

- **Economic Prosperity:** We invest in workforce development that results in sustainable, living wage jobs with competitive benefits. We also seek to increase access to capital and opportunities for historically under-resourced entrepreneurs.
- **Environment:** We invest in efforts led by those most affected by environmental injustice and that ensure equitable environmental benefit.

2. Grand Rapids Community Foundation is committed to creating an anti-racist community working to eliminate inequities. We seek partners who share in this commitment and demonstrate practices that aggressively disrupt the conditions that hold racism in place. If selected to submit a full application, we will request additional information and/or documentation regarding your organization's anti-racism and equity practices.

Context to consider while answering the following questions: To become more actively anti-racist, Grand Rapids Community Foundation has been on a journey to explore the ways we have allowed culture and systems to maintain white supremacy. We want to understand how our actions, attitudes, and decisions have directly and indirectly led us to where we are today. We are committed to disrupting those behaviors.

The Community Foundation is seeking partnerships with those who are also on a journey to become anti-racist. When responding to the following questions, reflect and acknowledge how your organization's practices may exclude others. Also, consider your organization's active journey to disrupt those norms.

2A: Is anyone excluded from services, employment, or volunteer participation based on 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?

We seek partnerships that share power, create open feedback loops, and center the culture and values of historically marginalized groups. Organizations that advocate for people of all identities to flourish personally and professionally are great partners in our work. Exclusion based on class, beliefs, race, or gender is a discriminatory practice and does not align with our values. When responding to this question, evaluate your organization internally and externally. Does your organization have policies and practices that guarantee full and equal participation for people of all identities?

2B: Does your organization have an equity statement communicating your pursuit of anti-racist practices and aspirations toward equity?

If you are invited to submit a full application, we will request a written copy of your organization's equity statement. Other written policies that speak directly to anti-racist practices, such as human resources and personnel documents, are also encouraged.

2C: Do people of color lead your organization?

Leadership within an organization takes on many forms. Grand Rapids Community Foundation defines the leadership of an organization as the founder(s), executive director, board of directors, volunteers, and staff. Being led by people of color means that people of color are a majority in three or more of those categories. While the organization's leadership will be considered, you may still submit a pre-application if people of color do not lead your organization.

Select the categories in which people of color are a majority (Founder, Executive Director, Leadership Team, Board of Directors, Volunteers, Staff, Communities Served).

3. What is the proposed solution to the priority area you selected above? (Answer in 300 words or less)

Context to consider while answering this question: Please use this section to describe your project or program. We look for responses that consider the following things:

- Is this addressing a root cause?
- Is this addressing systemic barriers?
- Have other partners or stakeholders been approached?
- Has community voice been included?
- What other organizations or projects are attempting to address this problem?
- Who is requesting this proposed solution?
- In what ways are you going to impact community?

4. How have the individuals experiencing the inequity been engaged in creating the proposed solution? What leadership role will they play throughout the implementation and evaluation? (Answer in 300 words or less)

Context to consider while answering this question: When an organization is developing solutions, we believe that individuals experiencing the inequity should be in a leadership role with decision-making power. We look for solutions co-designed with community. Strong partnerships also include opportunities for open feedback. We look for responses that consider the following:

- Has the community that these solutions will impact asked your organization to be a leader and/or advocate for addressing their needs?
- How are the communities being served actively included in creating solutions? What is their ongoing involvement throughout the project?
- How is your organization positioned to address this inequity?
- How are you building power, sharing power, and wielding power?
- Are those experiencing inequities, specifically people of color, paid for their partnership and expertise?

5. How will you know if the proposed solution is progressing toward achieving equity? (Answer in 150 words or less)

Context to consider while answering this question: Dismantling systems toward equity is a heavy lift. Data is a powerful tool to help us see the full story of the varied experiences in our community. Ideal projects strive for outcomes that show impact on grassroots and systems levels. We look for responses that consider the following things:

- Evaluation methods that include qualitative and quantitative analysis
- Pre and post surveys, focus groups, and ongoing feedback loops
- Policy change, outreach efforts/community engagement, and advocacy work
- Numbers and demographics of people served
- Impact and/or deliverables
- How are you ensuring progress toward your goal?

**6. How will the project be supported beyond the grant partnership with the Community Foundation?
Please include all partnerships and funders. (Answer in 150 words or less)**

Context to consider while answering the following question: Help us understand how your project and organization are woven into the fabric of the ecosystem you seek to change. We value collaboration and community partnership. In our experience, diverse stakeholder support helps contribute to the success of the project's outcomes. We look for responses that address the following items:

- Which stakeholders, partner organizations, and other funders are connected to the project?

NEXT STEPS

Projects with a strong potential for investment by the Community Foundation will be asked to submit a full proposal, and a site visit will be conducted. Our volunteer Fund for Community Good Advisory Committee will meet after the site visit to consider the partnership and determine the details of their recommendation.

Once approved, grant recipients will receive instructions to access their funding. Any contingencies and reporting requirements will be explained at that time.

Grant partnership with the Community Foundation extends beyond financial resources. We are committed to shared learning, thought partnership, and open feedback loops with our partners.

If you would like a preview of the full application questions, please [click here](#). Please note that additional questions will be added that are unique to the organization and project.

QUESTIONS?

You can view our frequently asked questions at grfoundation.org/apply-for-funding/grant-application.

For additional questions, please reach out to our program directors.

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