Nonprofit Funding Opportunity

Fund for Louisville 2021 - 2023: Racial Justice Cohort
Strengthening Black-led Social Change Organizations to Advance and Inform Systems-level Change

Summary
Grants of $5,000 to $40,000 that can be used for any nonprofit purpose and are renewable each year for three years, for Black-led, 501c3 nonprofit social change organizations (or charitable projects that are fiscally sponsored by those organizations), located in Louisville, KY who are seeking to increase their capacity with a cohort of organizations. Phase 1 of the application period opens on February 8, 2021 and closes on March 29, 2021 at 11:59 PM (EST). For more information, see
https://www.cflouisville.org/grants-partnerships/fund-for-louisville-2020/

Ramona Dallum Lindsey is also available at ramonal@cflouisille.org to help you through any step of the process.

Introduction
Most Americans aspire to live healthy lives, build wealth, fully participate in the democratic process, and excel to their fullest potential. Established policies, procedures, laws, and systems - intentionally and unintentionally - make it difficult for Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other people of color to achieve these aspirations.

Recent data highlighted by the Greater Louisville Project shows longstanding and growing gaps in outcomes for Black Louisvillians; in education, jobs/employment, health, and quality of place measures like housing.[1] The challenges of 2020 further exposed and amplified these racial inequities. CFL is partnering with funders and donors to intentionally recognize and invest in the work of Black-led social change organizations advancing and informing systems-level change for racial justice.

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[1] https://www.greaterlouisvilleproject.org/reports/2018-beyond-merger/

We believe systems need to change and are directing our available funds to support systems change. Louisville is fortunate to have a vibrant nonprofit sector that supports individuals and families as they pursue their aspirations and goals. We believe many of these organizations are undertaking the work to change policies, practices, laws, processes and systems that result in unequal outcomes. This systems-level work includes actions like a focus on advocacy, power sharing, civic engagement, community organizing and connections to leaders of political or other systems. Other organizations are creating programs offering knowledge, tools and resources to provide support to individuals as they face and work around the barriers created by inequitable systems. We believe there is benefit for organizations focusing on systems change through advocacy, policy change, and/or programs to have time, space, and financial support to connect with one another and identify ways to advance their goals.

Our foundation can do more to support Black-led social change. National data shows that foundations underfund Black-led nonprofit organizations resulting in the restricted ability of Black-led organizations to develop and implement organizational strategies which can lead to improved impact, growth, and sustainability. We are changing the Fund for Louisville grant process to be a model of accessible, equitable, and transparent grantmaking practices in our organization and community. This three-year strategy is one tool of many that will be required to make real change and just one way CFL is moving forward.

We believe that social change is most effective when led by communities most impacted by racial inequity. For the next three years, the Fund for Louisville, with additional funding from CFL partners and fundholders, will support a group (cohort) of 8-12 Black-led social change organizations with the goal of addressing racial inequity. The cohort will have opportunities for cross-sector knowledge sharing, identification of best practices, and networking as they work to change processes, systems, policies, and practices that result in inequitable outcomes based on race. Each organization will receive unrestricted grant funding that is renewable over three years, in addition to regular meetings and training sessions that will be designed in response to input from the selected organizations.

This cohort will be made up of:
- 8-12, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) public charities in good standing, or charitable projects that are fiscally sponsored by those organizations, located in Louisville, KY.

- Organizations who self-identify as Black-led social change organizations, which are those with predominantly Black board and executive leadership, staff leadership and constituents - if relevant - and whose primary organizational purpose is to work to build the political, economic, and/or social power of the Black community (including continental Africans, African Americans, Descendants

of American Slaves, Afro-Caribbeans, Afro-Latinos, and people of mixed ancestry). So, "Black-led" is about the demographic makeup and racial identity of the leadership as well as a political purpose of building power to ensure that the Black community thrives.[2]

- Organizations who agree that Black or Blackness (the state of being Black) is defined as: (1) the mix of physiological, geographical and cultural traits that defines Black people as people of African descent, many of whom were moved to specific regions in the world through the Trans-Atlantic slave trade (including continental Africans, African Americans, Afro-Caribbeans, Afro-Latinos and people of mixed ancestry who identify as being Black); (2) Black or Blackness is a political and historical reality of shared colonization and oppression at the hands of Europeans and Anglo-Americans and the resistance to this subjugation. Blackness is a political construct of survival and resistance against racial oppression.[3]

- A mix of organizations advancing systems-level change AND organizations delivering programs that seek to resolve a systems-level challenge or build the power of people to respond to systems-level challenges.

- Organizations who understand that ***systems-level change work includes*** a broad range of activities. It can include, but is not limited to: advocacy, lobbying, political power building, research, data collection, economic development, narrative development, leadership development and convening.

- Organizations who understand that ***systems-level programs provide*** skills, knowledge, and tools for individuals and communities to consistently overcome systems-level barriers.

- Organizations who understand that systems-level change work and programs ***do not mainly focus*** on providing temporary support of food, clothing, shelter, dollars or other tangible resources.

- Organizations that exhibit the following qualities:
    - **Asset-Oriented:** Organizations who view their work as supporting the aspirations, goals or achievements of Black people instead of focusing on their greatest challenges or mistakes
    - **Have clear goals:** Organizations who have clear goals, and understand and document their work and progress

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[2] "The Case for Funding Black-Led Social Change." Black Social Change Funders Network, http://www.blacksocialchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/BSCFN-Case-Statement.pdf
[3] Ibid.

- o **Community-Engaged:** Organizations who meaningfully engage those they support to inform their work and decision making
- o **Partnership-Oriented:** Organizations who engage in meaningful partnerships, collaborations, coalitions or networks to effectively use resources and increase the impact of their work to advance shared community goals
- o **Have dedicated help:** Organizations with volunteers or staff that are able to work toward the achievement of the organization's goals and aspirations
- o **Seeking to build organizational capacity:** Organizations who are willing to plan and execute a three-year strategy to increase their organizational capacity, collaborate to advance critical parts of their work and/or improve their ability to continue its efforts
- o **Interest and ability to participate in a multi-year cohort:** Organizations who are interested in actively participating in a multi-year learning cohort with opportunities for knowledge sharing, identification of best practices, and coordinated activities which encourage networking.

What will each organization gain?

- Each organization may request an annual grant amount from $5,000 to $40,000. Organizations **will not** need to propose specific projects or provide potential budgets detailing the use of the dollars. In fact, grant amounts will not be discussed until after organizations have been invited to participate in the cohort.
- The budget for this grant program is approximately $500,000 each year for three years, as follows:

Grants to selected organizations	82%
Capacity building support per organization	10%
Quarterly workshops	5%
Community engagement events	3%

- Grant funds may be used for any nonprofit purpose including, but not limited to: daily operations, staff, technology, professional development, and programming.
- Grants are renewable at the initial award amount each year for three years. (Currently the amount requested in year one will be the same amount that is received in years two and three.)
- Opportunities for regular workshops and networking designed in response to cohort member needs.
- Input on determining the measures of success for the cohort.

How can organizations apply?

There are two phases of the application process. The questions are designed for organizations to describe the value of their work and their overall strategy to change systems or help people overcome systems-level barriers.

Phase 1: Introduce your work to the Community Foundation in no more than 5 minutes or 750 words in audio or written format.

Phase 2: Selected organizations invited to share additional information via interviews with the selection committee.

Timeline

February 8, 2021: Phase 1 Opens; organizations are invited to share brief introductions with CFL

February 8 - March 8, 2021: Information Sessions with Aspirational Elevator Pitch workshops

March 29, 2021: Phase 1 Closes, 11:59 PM (EST)

April 27 - May 4, 2021: Phase 1 Applicants notified; 25 organizations invited to Phase 2

May 5 - 14, 2021: Interviews are held with Phase 2 organizations

June 10, 2021: Grantees announced

Phase 1: Short introduction of your organization

Submit from February 8 until March 29, 2021 at 11:59 PM (EST)

- Please introduce your work to the Community Foundation in no more than 5 minutes or 750 words, responding to the questions below
- You may submit your response in one of two ways:

1. Upload a voice memo that you self-produce.
We encourage organizations to keep this simple; ***please do not*** spend any money or significant time producing a recording. *If you desire guidance for how to create a voice memo, please see these links:* How to create a voice memo on a smartphone and How to create a voice memo on a computer

OR

2. Submit your response in writing

Submit the voice memo or the written response here:
https://cflouisville.formstack.com/forms/nonprofit_funding_opportunity

- Your submission will be evaluated based on what is said, not the quality of the submission. There is not a preference for one method over the other.
- In your audio **OR** written introduction, we request that you respond to the following six questions:
    1. Name of nonprofit, 501(c)(3) public charity, or charitable project that is fiscally sponsored.
    2. Black-led social change organizations are defined as those with predominantly Black board and executive leadership, staff leadership and constituents - if relevant - and whose primary organizational purpose is to work to build the political, economic and/or social power of the Black community.

       So, "Black-led" is about the demographic makeup and racial identity of the leadership as well as a political purpose of building power to ensure that the Black community thrives. Briefly explain how your organization meets this definition.
    3. What are your organization's current- and long-term goals to impact systems?
    4. Please tell us about the people you support through your efforts and how you support them to achieve their aspirations and goals, or to make contributions to the Black community. Please give specific examples.
    5. What makes your organization special, unique, and powerful?
    6. If you had three wishes for your organization, what would they be?

How organizations will be evaluated in Phase 1
Review period: April 5 - April 26, 2021

- Organization is, or is a project fiscally sponsored by, a 501c3 nonprofit organization in good standing.
- Organization indicates how the definition of Black-led social change describes their organization.
- Organization describes its work as building up the strengths and assets of people and/or places.
- The organization's goals and aspirations are clear and directly impact a system that is preventing Black individuals, families, or communities from realizing their aspirations.
- Organization describes people through their assets, aspirations, or contributions instead of their greatest challenges or mistakes.
- Organization shares at least one example of how it builds the power of people or places, which may include but is not limited to: helping people advocate or organize; engaging political or systems leaders; or accessing resources to overcome system barriers.

Phase 2: Share additional information during interviews with the selection committee

25 organizations will receive interview invitations April 27 - May 4, 2021. Interviews will take place May 5 – May 14, 2021.

Seven questions will be asked of organizations during the interview.

1. Tell us about the system or systems you are impacting through your work. What has the Covid-19 pandemic, racial, social and political unrest revealed to you about your work? Does your work impact systems at a city, county, state, national, or international level?

2. If your work succeeds, how will it change systems to improve people's ability to obtain their aspirations, goals, or increase their contributions to the Black community?

3. Please tell us about your organization's leadership and team. How does the leadership and staff/volunteers work together to contribute to the success of your efforts? What skills, knowledge, relationships, experiences or resources do they offer?

4. How do you know you are making positive progress on your goals? What do you look for to know that you have achieved your goal?

5. Please tell us how your team engages people and places you support. How do those people and places inform your organization's work and decision making?

6. Please tell us about the benefits and lessons you learned from partnerships or collaborations.

7. In addition to grant funds that may be used for any nonprofit purpose, CFL will regularly convene over 3 years a cohort of 8-12 organizations for networking and invest in organization-defined capacity and community building. With that in mind, what skills, knowledge, expertise, and/or networks might your organization gain through this support? What will participating in this three year cohort mean to your organization and its work?

How organizations will be evaluated in Phase 2
Review period: May 17 - 27, 2021

- The organization's goals are specific and achievable and it is clear how the organization's work is advancing toward those goals.
- The organization demonstrates an understanding of capacity needs necessary to advance the organization's goals and aspirations while including people with first-hand knowledge of and relationships with the population it supports.

- The organization clearly understands and uses evidence to determine how they are making progress on their goals.
- It's clear how the organization's work and decision making is informed by those it seeks to support and that it engages this community in an ongoing manner.
- Organization shares tangible and/or actionable lessons learned partnerships or collaborations.
- The organization has clear expectations for participating in the cohort and describes realistic benefits from participating in the multi-year cohort experience.

Who makes the grant selections?

In Phase 1, a 7-member committee, made up of members of the Black Community representing the Fund for Louisville Design workgroup that designed this grant process and a CFL board member, will review all submissions, using the Phase 1 review criteria outlined above to score submissions. 25 organizations will be invited to proceed to Phase 2.

In Phase 2, a 25-member committee will make final grant decisions. The Selection committee is comprised of:
- Members of the Black community in Louisville and its allies, with no more than 20% or 5 members being allies. Informed by research and community input, CFL's working definition of an ally is anyone from a non-Black group who is working towards ending oppression by moving beyond a declaration to intentional action using their privilege and position to realign resources to realize the aspirations of oppressed and marginalized populations.
- 13 members have specific expertise in the assets and needs of the Black community; 7 members of the Fund for Louisville Design Workgroup that informed this grant process; 5 are members of the philanthropic sector.
- The group is broadly diverse in terms of thought, experience, and status and includes individuals who have received services from nonprofit organizations, nonprofit founders, grassroots leaders, and people under age 24.
- In groups of five, the committee will conduct 45-minute virtual interviews with organizations invited to Phase 2. Only one non-Black ally will be assigned to each 5-person interview team.
- When all interviews are complete, the full committee meeting will be facilitated by an independent, non-voting facilitator to review and discuss recommendations as they select a final cohort of 8-12 organizations.
- The committee will use the Phase 2 review criteria outlined above to select grantees.

Both committees will meet at times that are accessible for all members, and committee members will receive a financial stipend for their time.

How will the Foundation manage real or perceived conflicts of interest?

It is important to us that our processes are transparent. Once the applicant organizations are known, and prior to the start of any selection process, selection committee members will be asked to reveal any relationships that may impact their own financial interests or the private interests of others with whom they have a financial or beneficial relationship, including:

- Board membership or immediate family member's board membership of any organization seeking a grant;
- Employment or immediate family member's employment by an organization seeking a grant;
- A vendor relationship or immediate family member's vendor relationship with any organization seeking a grant, or;
- Any other reason for which the committee member feels unable to review an applicant without bias.
- When a conflict of interest is made known, and the Community Foundation determines that the conflict may interfere with the selection committee member's judgement or has the appearance of affecting judgement, the member will abstain from discussion and voting on that matter.

What if I have questions?

- Please contact Ramona Dallum Lindsey at ramonal@cflouisville.org.
- Visit the Fund for Louisville webpage which will be updated with questions received and CFL responses during the Phase 1 application period.