

GROUP HEALTH FOUNDATION

2021 Community Learning Grants Call for Applications

Organizations and communities across Washington are doing powerful work to improve health equity: from grassroots organizing and leadership development, to cultural reclamation and community-centered healing, to civic engagement and policy advocacy. Group Health Foundation is eager to support this work, and excited to invite organizations doing such work to apply for a grant.

Grants are three-year awards of core-support funding. Organizations often call this “general operating support.” Groups that are fiscally sponsored by another entity can also receive core-support grants. In those cases, it means that the funding is (a) restricted to a named, sponsored project and (b) able to be used for any part of the project’s expenses and work.

The Foundation will award up to \$15 million in grants through this open call, with a streamlined application that encourages organizations to share about your mission, leadership, and the aspirations you have for your community. We expect to make grants to 70 to 80 organizations. Each grant is a three-year commitment, with award amounts ranging from \$150,000 to \$225,000 in total funding (\$50,000 to \$75,000 per year).

These grants are intended to support a range of organizations who are dismantling inequities in their many forms. We will prioritize organizations that have historically been under resourced by philanthropy based on where they are, who they serve, and what their leadership looks like. Over time, we hope to level the philanthropic playing field by supporting smaller and/or newer organizations that are advancing community visions for a healthy, equitable Washington. We are especially excited to support the ongoing leadership of community advocates whose influence and community-based support will continue to grow over time.

Funding priorities

We have a broad and inclusive definition of health, and we support organizations that are leading powerful work to improve health equity and advance community aspirations for a vibrant, healthy future. In 2021, the Foundation will prioritize organizations and fiscally sponsored projects that:

- **Have been overlooked by—or have had limited access to—philanthropy and institutional funders.** We are interested in work that has not been supported by multiyear and flexible funding. “Newer” or “smaller” organizations are encouraged to apply, as are those whose communities have been systematically underfunded by private philanthropy.
- **Are founded, led, and governed by people who reflect their communities.** We specifically assess if and how a group’s board, chief executive, and staff leadership—or volunteer leadership for organizations who do not have staff—reflect the people the organization serves.
- **Represent a place- and/or identity-based community** who is most adversely impacted by health inequities. We seek to fund work by and for Black, Indigenous, and other communities

of color; queer, transgender, and gender-nonconforming people; people with disabilities; immigrants and refugees; people living with low incomes; and especially people who several of these identities. Places may include tribal lands, small or medium-sized cities, unincorporated areas, and communities in rural settings.

- **Are pursuing culturally specific and intersectional approaches to their work.** As long as it is toward a vision of health equity in Washington, the work could be organizing mutual aid, conducting community organizing and leadership development, reclaiming cultural practices and connection, leading anti-racism and anti-colonialism work, engaging people in political education and policy advocacy, and the many other ways communities express power.
- **Are determined to change current structures that uphold the status quo of who has access to social, political, and economic power.** We are interested in how organizations are working to challenge white supremacy and systems that have excluded or oppressed their communities.

Additional information: what we are *unlikely* to support with Community Learning Grants. The Foundation generally does not expect to support the following with Community Learning Grants:

- Organizations and fiscally sponsored projects that have significant financial assets and philanthropic revenue from foundations and private donors.
- Philanthropy-serving organizations, funder collaboratives, and community-of-interest funds (including those hosted by charitable organizations and research institutions).
- Partisan efforts or candidate electioneering, regardless of party affiliation.
- Specific departments, pilot projects, or some component part of larger organizations. (Note: This is distinct from fiscally sponsored projects.)
- Friends-of, fans-of, parents-of, and supporters-of groups affiliated with larger institutions.

Community Learning Grants do not support individuals (e.g., scholarships and fellowships), nor do they support organizations that do not primarily serve people in and immediately surrounding Washington.

How to apply

Submit a funding proposal on or before **May 6, 2021**. The proposal will help us learn about an organization's vision, values, goals, community, structure, and partners.

The preferred method for submitting your application is through our [online application form](#). If the online application doesn't work for you, you are also welcome to submit your application via email to grants@grouphealthfoundation.org, using a template available on our website [here](#). Please note that the online application form does allow you to begin your application, save your work, and return to it later.

The Foundation will notify grant recipients of awards and send out grant agreement letters in July. If we have questions, updates, or other follow-up items for applicants during the proposal review period (May and June), we will reach out to the contact person listed in the grant application.

Accessibility

Group Health Foundation strives to make this process widely available to disabled people, people who communicate in languages other than English, and organizations new to working with philanthropy or other funders. We have been working with groups around Washington to understand different types of needs that may come up. Based on that learning, the following documents are publicly available on our [website](#):

- Application Guidelines:
 - Large print format
 - Spanish
- Funding Application:
 - Large print format
 - Spanish

In addition, we will provide upon request:

- Interpretation and translation services to ensure access to our guidelines, applications, and supplemental information in languages other than English (including ASL and/or CART).
- Alternative application methods, including over the phone, by video or voice recording, and on paper (as opposed to digital submission).
- Support from a contracted grant writer.

Contact us at grants@grouphealthfoundation.org or 866.389.5532 to tell us what you need to submit an application. We know it takes time, trust, and effort to make these requests of the Foundation. Thank you for your willingness to share how we can make this process work for you.

Frequently asked questions

The Foundation is committed to providing clear communication about the proposal process, answers to important questions, and updates. We also recognize that there may be more questions than we can anticipate.

Please check our [website](#) for information and responses to frequently asked questions that will be updated regularly based on common questions we receive. We will also schedule a series of information sessions for interested organizations to speak with Foundation staff.

Given the small size of our team, we usually are not able to speak with applicants prior to a deadline. We do not review applications prior to submission. We expect to prioritize direct discussions with people and organizations that:

- Communicate in languages other than English and have interpretation needs.
- Live in parts of the state without broadband or reliable internet connection, who may benefit from the chance to submit applications in alternative ways (for example, by phone or on paper).
- Would benefit from grant writing support.
- Have disability access needs that require specific support.
- Are newer to working with foundations and funders like Group Health Foundation.

If you have specific questions that are not answered through the website or addressed during our information sessions, please contact us at grants@grouphealthfoundation.org or 866.389.5532. We will acknowledge and respond to all inquiries as quickly as we can.

Appendix: Definitions

Fiscal sponsorship

Fiscal sponsorship is a legal arrangement between two organizations that allows one organization (that doesn't have its own nonprofit tax status) to use the nonprofit tax status of another organization in order to raise money and manage work. Specifically,

- a **fiscal sponsor or sponsoring organization** agrees to provide its tax status and other services to
- a **fiscally sponsored project**, a group that is using the fiscal sponsor's nonprofit tax status to request funding and to accept the financial and legal responsibilities of grant agreements. The sponsored project usually has a distinct name, identity, staff and/or volunteer leader, as well as a separate advisory board or steering committee that guides the project's work.

(Our thanks to [Candid](#) for help with these definitions.)

When applying for Community Learning Grants, fiscal sponsors must be able to provide documents that clearly define the differing roles and responsibilities of the fiscal sponsor (e.g., their legal, administrative, and financial oversight) versus the sponsored project (e.g., ability to exercise reasonable independence in programs and priorities). The fiscal sponsor must have the ability to produce separate financial statements and reports for each project that applies for funding.

Culturally specific organization

Culturally specific organizations are led by and serve the experiences of a specific identity group. Because they are centered around and informed by the experiences of that group, culturally specific organizations are often best positioned to meet the goals, challenges, and hopes of a particular identity group.

Cross-racial organization

Cross-racial organizations bring together individuals and communities of different races to advance racial justice and other common goals. Cross-racial work consolidates people, power, and influence to achieve intended outcomes. In some spaces, white people can join cross-racial work as accomplices and allies.

Historically white-led organization

Historically white-led organization refers to a group or organization that currently or historically has not considered race and ethnicity as part of their context, priorities, mission, vision, theory of change, or leadership composition. Historically white-led organizations have systematically decontextualized their organization, with or without intention, from the reality of race and ethnicity, often rooted in the fact that whiteness is considered “neutral,” “universal,” and the “norm.” This narrative of whiteness perpetuates the longstanding practice of hiring leaders who are not reflective of the identities and lived experiences of an organization's constituency, which in turn results in a lack of accountability to those communities and decisions that ultimately do not bring about effective solutions for the people most impacted by structural inequities. This is particularly salient as we learn about communities

across Washington, in which the narrative of whiteness as a “norm” does not match our information about who Washington is today. The reality is that people of color and immigrants live in every county, city, and community. And, in many places across the state, they are the majority of the population. Because equity is demonstrated over time and through action, this definition can apply to organizations along the continuum of equity practice, from those who have recently adopted “equity plans” or “inclusion strategies” to those who are further along in their commitment to equity and may have added staff and board members who are racially diverse in numbers that are representative of racial demographics across Washington. Organizations can be historically white-led while being representative of other communities experiencing systemic oppression, such as disability, LGBTQIA+, formerly incarcerated, those living in poverty, and others.

Multi-racial/multi-cultural organization

A multi-racial and/or multi-cultural organization is one in which leadership and staff are representative of multiple racial or cultural identities. A multi-racial or multi-cultural organization may work to advance the needs of multiple racial or cultural communities by engaging those communities in bridge building, organizing, and advocacy work.