

Community Solutions Grant Program Guidelines

Program Overview

F. R. Bigelow Foundation supports solutions informed by, formed by and benefiting East Metro residents. The goal of our Community Solutions Grant Program is to strengthen quality of life in the East Metro, support a vibrant East Metro region and advance racial equity.

Funding Priorities

Our Community Solutions Grant Program has five focus areas and will consider proposals that address one or more of the following:

Arts & Culture

Strengthening the arts and culture sector to serve all individuals and all communities across the East Metro region

- The Foundation believes that all peoples, their cultures, and their art contribute to the meaning and understanding of our humanity and should be honored and celebrated.
- Priority will be given to arts and culture organizations that seek to amplify narratives and voices across BIPOC communities and other communities experiencing marginalization (e.g., people with disabilities, low-income communities, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, formerly incarcerated people, etc.) through the arts.

Community & Economic Development

Building a strong and vital East Metro through community building, physical development and strengthening support for low-income individuals, families and underrepresented communities through workforce development and training.

- The Foundation seeks to invest and partner in solutions informed and formed by the people facing the highest barriers to wealth creation, economic security and family-sustaining career pathways. In the East Metro, this includes BIPOC, women, veterans, young people, people with disabilities, formerly incarcerated people and LGBTQIA+ people.
- Specific priorities for wealth creation include strengthening the entrepreneur ecosystem and increasing local ownership of businesses and homes.
- Regarding economic security, the Foundation recognizes the importance of anchor institutions embedded at the neighborhood level. For workforce development, we will prioritize employment pathways that meet the needs of individuals and employers alike.

Health

Increasing health equity through quality, affordable, culturally relevant services, particularly for low-income, uninsured, under-insured and socially marginalized individuals

- The Foundation continues to prioritize health organizations that focus on health equity and increase access to affordable, culturally relevant health services.

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- The Foundation hopes to align its health grants to be inclusive of programs and organizations that serve low-income families, provide free or affordable, culturally relevant services, and holistic care.
- Given the increase in severity, cost of and demand for mental health services, urgent care and/or crisis prevention, access to reproductive health care, trauma-informed health care, and free or reduced services for uninsured or underinsured communities, the Foundation will prioritize these programs and organizations to continue to serve our most vulnerable and marginalized communities.

Human Services

Investing in basic needs for individuals and families, helping them be safe, stable and independent

- The Foundation will prioritize grants that assist residents in navigating life transitions, finding safety and stability, and promoting independence.
- In addition to supporting work that centers the voices of the people most impacted by an organization's work, special priority will be given to disability support services, child welfare support services, family and parent support services, food relief and assistance, older adult services, immigration and legal services, and re-entry supports for formerly incarcerated people.

Youth & Education

Supporting under-served children, youth and young adults by investing in access to high-quality education and youth development both in and out of school from cradle to career

- The Foundation recognizes how important it is for students and young people to feel cared for, protected, valued and seen after a difficult period in their learning and growth. This is complex and urgent work, and the Foundation will prioritize organizations that blend academic, social and emotional support for young people most impacted by educational inequity.
- The Foundation will also prioritize support to organizations working to build a robust early childhood system that gives children and families access to high-quality care and education programs.

Eligibility

Grants can be made to 501(c)3 nonprofits, government entities, educational institutions or organizations with a fiscal sponsor. Organizations should have a demonstrated impact or potential for impact in the East Metro (Dakota, Ramsey and Washington counties).

While an organization may be eligible to apply, attention and preference will be given to organizations:

- Addressing disparities and/or creating more equitable outcomes for communities experiencing marginalization due to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability or geography
- Establishing a clear connection to the Informs, Forms, Benefits framework, which states that those experiencing barriers should not only benefit from the work we support, but inform, form, and lead it as well

Type of Grants

General Operating

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These grants provide flexible funding for nonprofits in which at least 50% of the organization's services benefit residents in the East Metro (Dakota, Ramsey and Washington counties).

Program/Project

These grants are designed to provide support to a program or project serving 50% or more East Metro residents. The Foundation will consider proposals for established and/or new programs/projects. Any organization is eligible for this type of grant regardless of overall geographic focus. In other words, the organization can do 75% of its work in Hennepin County or elsewhere, but would be eligible to apply for a project serving mostly Dakota, Ramsey and Washington county residents.

Capital

As part of F. R. Bigelow Foundation's Community Solutions grantmaking, organizations may apply for capital support. To be eligible for capital support, organizations must demonstrate ongoing or potential significant benefit to East Metro (Dakota, Ramsey and Washington counties) residents. Capital grants will support an organization's long-term resiliency or infrastructure including:

- Efforts to ensure critical resources remain stable and present in the East Metro (e.g., "comprehensive campaigns" intended to grow or strengthen organizational capacity; program innovations or compliance updates needed to ensure responsiveness and relevancy etc.)
- Physical or digital capital needs such as purchase, updates to or maintenance of buildings, facilities, technology and/or equipment.

Grant Details

Grant amounts will be up to \$50,000 per year for a period of one to two years for general operating and program/project support, and up to \$250,000 over two years for capital projects.

In 2026, approximately \$5,000,000 is available for this grant program, and we anticipate awarding approximately 100 grants.

This program is intended to be responsive to ongoing and timely community opportunities through an open and rolling application process. Applications submitted by February 20 will be reviewed for June awards. Applications submitted by May 29 will be reviewed for September awards. Applications submitted by August 14 will be reviewed for November awards.

Grant Requests Not Accepted

F. R. Bigelow Foundation will not consider grant requests for support of:

- Capital projects located outside Dakota, Ramsey and Washington counties
- Organizations not primarily serving residents of Dakota, Ramsey and Washington counties
- Sectarian religious programs or organizations
- Grants to individuals
- Medical research

If your organization does not fit the funding criteria, we encourage you to explore other [Grant Opportunities](#), as well as [Resources Beyond the Grant](#) on the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation website. F.R. Bigelow Foundation is a partner foundation of the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation.