Leveraging Policy and Advocacy Efforts to Advance Equity, Justice, Inclusion and Engagement

Si necesita ayuda para traducir este paquete de información al Español, por favor contacte a Maria Torres (she/her) vía correo electrónico at mtorres@rcfdenver.org

Overview

Rose Community Foundation has an open funding opportunity for nonprofit organizations in the Greater Denver region. This grant cycle is intended to support Greater Denver’s diverse and dynamic ecosystem of organizations that leverage policy and advocacy efforts to help communities furthest from opportunity create conditions for equity, justice, inclusion and engagement. We are especially interested in supporting organizations working to close gaps in access, opportunity and power by cultivating systems change or influencing the levers of policy.

We seek to fund a diverse slate of organizations engaging in equity-focused policy and advocacy work. Applicants may work at the state level, the local level or both and may pursue short- or long-term policy objectives. We aim to support policy efforts across a variety of issue areas that represent a broad spectrum of approaches, ideologies, and populations served. Many grant recipients will be primarily policy-focused organizations, but we are also open to applications from organizations delivering direct services or programming that request funding for a specific advocacy component of their work (though proposals centered around non-policy work will not be considered).

Examples of work we intend to fund in this cycle include, but are not limited to, organizations engaging in:

- Advocacy – including lobbying – for specific statewide, municipal or district policy efforts that close systemic gaps and grow financial, social, political or cultural capital for those furthest from opportunity.
- Advocacy on behalf of communities that are furthest from opportunity and that lifts up impacted community voices to help advance policy priorities.
- Research that informs policy actions/recommendations or strengthens policy campaigns that are related to the goals of this RFP.
- Impactful advocacy coalitions that are collaboratively working toward shared policy objectives.
- Implementation of recently passed policies that Rose Community Foundation has endorsed.

Though we understand applicants may not yet have a fully detailed sense of their specific policy objectives for the grant period of November 1, 2023 – October 31, 2024, proposals should articulate a clear organizational point of view, approach, process and set of goals around cultivating systems change or influencing the levers of policy. While the Foundation appreciates the importance and value of local organizations focused on general civic engagement or community strengthening efforts without an emphasis on directly impacting policies or systems, that is not the focus of this grant opportunity.

To achieve our goals of advancing equity and justice; fostering an inclusive and engaged Greater Denver; and increasing resources dedicated to mission-aligned good, Rose Community Foundation funds work in a variety of issue areas including the following pathways:

- Anti-hate and discrimination
- Arts and culture
- Behavioral health
- Criminal justice
- ECE-20 education
- Economic opportunity
- Environment
- Fiscal reform
- Gun safety
- Health
- Housing
- Immigration
- Reproductive rights
Eligibility

- This opportunity is open to nonprofit organizations – 501(c)(3)s and 501(c)(4)s – or fiscally sponsored projects serving the seven-county Greater Denver region (Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas and Jefferson counties) or advancing statewide policy efforts that benefit those within that catchment area.
- Local/municipal, state and federal government agencies are not eligible for this opportunity.
- Organizations funded through donor-advised funds or giving circles at Rose Community Foundation are eligible to apply if other eligibility requirements are met.
- Organizations that house endowments at Rose Community Foundation are eligible to apply, but like all other applicants, are not guaranteed a grant award.
- Organizations funded through Rose Community Foundation’s 2023 Civic Engagement or Arts and Culture rolling grant opportunities are eligible to apply, but proposed activities for this cycle must be distinct from efforts for which an organization is already receiving funding.
- Organizations that have funding from the Foundation’s 2023 Building Equitable Futures for Children and Youth or Jewish Life grant cycles are not eligible for this opportunity.
- Rose Community Foundation currently has multiple open RFPs, and we encourage organizations that think they could be a fit for more than one to speak to a member of our team before applying.

We are interested in proposals that:

- Specify the problems and/or opportunities the organization seeks to address, as well as the specific policy changes required.
- Center and elevate impacted community voices.
- Are informed by diverse perspectives and experiences, with communities that the organization serves engaged in leadership, program design and implementation.
- Provide a plan and activities to be accomplished in the grant period.
- Articulate what success would look like as a result of the activities outlined.
- Commit to advancing equity across gender, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, income, ability, age and/or geography.

What else do we consider when making funding decisions?

- Whether executive leadership, board and staff are representative of the communities the organization serves.
- How community engagement and participation inform the organization’s work.
- Organization’s recent history of impact and success leveraging policy and advocacy to advance equity, justice, inclusion and engagement.
- Whether proposed work demonstrates an integrated, cross-cutting approach that is inclusive of more than one issue area pathway.
- Whether proposed work benefits diverse communities beyond the interests of a specific industry or group of members.
- Financial picture of the organization.
- Our dollars are limited, and we will consider whether an organization already has open funding from Rose Community Foundation in an effort to reach new-to-us organizations, communities, and types of work or projects that are not eligible for funding via other Rose Community Foundation grant cycles.
How much funding and what type of funding is available?

- **Total funding available:** $1.8 million. We anticipate making between 35-50 grants and expect this to be a highly competitive process. Please note that not all grant applications will be awarded funding, and of those applications funded, not all grants will be for the full amount requested.
- **Grant duration:** Most grant lengths will be one year.
- **Funding amounts will typically range from $25,000 to $75,000, with amounts determined based on alignment with the grant cycle objectives** and a clear organizational point of view, approach, process, and set of goals around cultivating systems change or influencing the levers of policy. Grant amounts will be awarded based primarily on the quality and quantity of an organization’s policy and advocacy work, rather than the work of the organization as a whole.
- **Types of support:**
  - **General Operating Support.** With the intention of providing maximum flexibility for nonprofit organizations engaging in policy and advocacy work, we anticipate that most grants will be for general operating support.
  - **Program or Project Support**
    - Organizations that have a primary organizational focus that does not include policy and advocacy should apply for policy-specific program funding. Non-policy work will not be considered through this grant opportunity.
    - Organizations that do national or multi-state work should apply for program funding and specify that grant dollars would be used exclusively for regional activities or statewide efforts that benefit our region.
    - Organizations applying on behalf of a coalition are required to apply for program funding.
    - 501(c)(4) organizations are required to apply for program funding to distinguish from candidate or partisan work, which the Foundation cannot fund.
    - Any grant applicants may opt to have funding structured as program support if that is preferred.
    - Organizations that receive program or project support will be required to report lobbying expenses, if any.

What are the reporting and grantee expectations?

Organizations receiving grant funds will be asked to submit a short narrative report of outcomes in the grants portal. The deadline for that final report will be specified within grant contracts. Organizations receiving program or project support and organizations that are not 501(c)(3) entities will also be asked to submit financial reporting on the grant funds.

Because Rose Community Foundation relies on its grantee partners to inform its own policy positions, organizations receiving grant funds are requested to connect with Foundation staff as policy priorities are established, but no interim grant reports are required. Receiving funding through this grant cycle does not constitute the Foundation endorsing an organization’s specific policy positions, but rather reflects the importance of their advocacy perspective and voice.

**Timeline**

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<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>June 8 – July 6, 2023</td>
<td>Application open. Office hours available for applicants.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 10, 2023, at 5 p.m. MT</td>
<td>Application closes</td>
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<td>July 11 – Sept. 1, 2023</td>
<td>Site visits and follow ups for additional information, as needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 27, 2023</td>
<td>All applicants will be notified of funding decisions by this date</td>
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<td>Nov. 1, 2023 – Oct. 31, 2024</td>
<td>Grant period for funded projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 30, 2024</td>
<td>Final report due in online grants portal</td>
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How do I apply?
Sign in or create your account at rcfdenver.org/grantsapply and click the Apply icon at the top of the screen.
Locate the opportunity Policy and Advocacy Ecosystem and click the blue Apply button to start an application.

For questions about this opportunity
You may sign up for a virtual 20-minute session to speak with our public affairs team about this opportunity from June 8 - July 6. For questions about the grants portal or application or if you need accommodations in applying, please contact Chen-Pin Hu (she/her), grants associate, at chu@rcfdenver.org.

Additional support from Rose Community Foundation
Rose Community Foundation seeks to advance inclusive, engaged and equitable Greater Denver communities through values-driven philanthropy, and we envision a thriving region strengthened by its diversity and generosity. In addition to this and other grantmaking opportunities, the Foundation utilizes advocacy and philanthropic services to advance thriving Greater Denver communities.

Our staff works closely with individual and family donors to define and achieve their philanthropic goals and support the causes they care about most. Our philanthropic services team also brings together diverse groups of teens, young adults and women from across the Greater Denver community for collaborative giving circles.

Additionally, the Foundation has supported nearly 90 nonprofit organizations in creating endowment funds to sustain their vital work into the future. Through the Foundation’s Endowment Building Pathways, we offer training and coaching for nonprofits to integrate endowment building and legacy giving into their development work and incentives to help launch or grow an endowment fund.

Contact us to learn more about how we support nonprofits beyond programmatic grantmaking.

Application Questions
The following questions are provided here for reference only. Submit your responses via the grants portal.

Organization Information
- Executive Director/President/CEO's Name, Pronouns, and Title
- Authorized Contract Signer's Name, Pronouns, Title and Email Address
- Mission Statement
- Type of Organization. Indicate the organization type for the legal entity submitting this application (501(c)(3) – not fiscally sponsored; 501(c)(4); Fiscally Sponsored Organization; Other)
- Fiscal Sponsor Contact Information (if applicable). Provide the organization name and full contact information (name, pronouns, title, email address, phone number, and mailing address) for your point of contact with the fiscal sponsor for this project.

Grant Request Information
- Type of Support (General operating support; Program support)
- Coalition Support. If you are applying on behalf of a coalition, please ensure that you have chosen Program Support above.
- Project Name
- Short Description. Please provide a concise description of this grant request's specific charitable purpose. (Character limit 300)
• **Core Counties.** What are the three core counties (within the seven-county Greater Denver area) in which you do most of the work related to this grant request (i.e., the majority of people served live within these three counties)? If you only work in one or two counties, please select the one or two counties in which you do your work.

• **Level of Government.** At what level of government does your proposal seek to influence policy? Select all that apply. *(Federal level; State level; Municipal level; District level; Other)*

• **Type of Policy and Advocacy Work.** What type(s) of policy and advocacy work does your proposal seek to engage in? Select all that apply. *(Legislation; Ballot Measure(s); Policy implementation or rulemaking; Research to inform policy efforts; Other)*

• **Legal Compliance Guidelines.** Rose Community Foundation funds direct and grassroots lobbying efforts. If you are applying for program or project support, please clearly state any lobbying efforts in the application. The Foundation can support lobbying activities, but grantees need to clearly report all lobbying activities related to grant funds. If you are applying for general operating support, there is no need to specify whether grant funds will or will not be used for lobbying efforts. Foundation funds cannot be used for partisan electoral work or to endorse or oppose elected officials or candidates for public office.

**Narrative Questions**

• **Desired Change.** What “big picture” policy or systems changes are you working to bring about? What barriers to access, opportunity and power do you aim to address by changing systems or influencing the levers of policy? This is an opportunity to share about your organization’s multi-year policy and advocacy vision and longer-term objectives. *(Character Limit: 2500)*

• **Opportunities and Outcomes.** Recognizing that long-term wins may take years to enact, share what positive changes you hope to achieve over the grant period related to the goals of this grant application. At the end of the grant period, what do you envision success looking like? Identify specific qualitative and/or quantitative results you expect to achieve in this grant period. Describe the results and outcomes you hope to achieve, not the activities or outputs you plan to use to achieve them. *(Character Limit: 3500)*

• **Key Activities.** What are the most important activities you will undertake to achieve your intended outcomes over this grant period? If you have a specific set of actions, communication strategies or advocacy efforts you hope to carry out, please include them here. Describe your approach and process around cultivating systems change or influencing the levers of policy. If you do not have full clarity around your specific policy objectives for the grant period, outline how you will eventually identify and execute on those objectives. *(Character Limit: 3500)*

• **Recent Policy and Advocacy History.** Describe your relevant policy and advocacy efforts last year or over the past few years. Where did you find success? Where do you see opportunities for improvement? How do your upcoming policy and advocacy efforts build off lessons learned, roads paved and partnerships formed from past activities? *(Character Limit: 2000)*
  - We understand that applicants have engaged in policy and advocacy work at varying levels. The purpose of this question is to help the Foundation understand your recent policy efforts and how they inform your proposed activities.
  - If you are currently receiving funding through the Foundation’s 2022 Policy and Advocacy Ecosystem grant cycle, please include a brief update on any successes and/or challenges related to the proposed activities for that grant.
  - If you have not previously engaged in policy and advocacy work, instead describe why you are interested in leaning into this type of work and how you feel equipped to do so.

• **Community Served / Engagement.** Describe the community you serve and how communities or individuals engage, participate, and inform your policy and advocacy priorities and activities. *(Character Limit: 3000)*
• **Leadership Diversity.** We are committed to supporting organizations led by and representative of those most impacted by the issues your organization seeks to address. To that end, describe what steps your organization is taking to ensure leadership at all levels of your organization is reflective of the community you serve. By leadership, we mean executive directors, senior staff and board of directors, as well as core members who are leading the work. This could include leadership pipeline, hiring practices, staff transition planning and other explicit strategies that strive to increase diversity at all levels of the organization. (Character Limit: 2500)

• **Community Needs.** For the Foundation’s own understanding of community needs, what are the most pressing issues you are seeing in the communities you serve, OUTSIDE the scope of services your organization provides? What are the most pressing issues you are seeing in the communities you serve WITHIN the scope of services your organization provides? (Character Limit: 2000)

**Coalition Information (if applicable)**
- Name of Coalition
- Role in Coalition (i.e., lead, co-lead, steering committee member, member, etc.)
- Coalition Members. List all other organizations involved in the coalition.
- Coalition Background. Describe the coalition’s mission, history and overall work.
- Coalition Funding Needs

**Financials**
- **Current Fiscal Year Operating Budget.** Upload a 2023 (or current fiscal year) organizational operating budget (revenue and expenses).
- **Budget-to-Actual.** Upload a 2023 (or current fiscal year) organizational budget-to-actual report. If this is captured on the Operating Budget in the previous question, you can skip this upload.
- **Policy and Advocacy Budget Narrative.** Describe the amount of the organizational budget that is devoted to policy and advocacy work. Grant amounts will be awarded based primarily on the quality and quantity of an organization’s policy and advocacy work rather than the work of the organization as a whole. If your organization experienced or is expecting to experience a deficit (reflected in the operating budget above), please provide details on how the deficit was managed or plans to address it. Please also provide comments explaining any major changes or unusual occurrences in your budget(s).
- **Program Budget (if applicable).** Upload a program budget for the activities for which you are requesting funding. Include a separate lien item for lobbying expenses, if relevant.
- **Total Lobbying Expenses (program support requests only).** Enter the total amount anticipated to be used for lobbying expenses. If none, enter zero. Ensure the following is included in this number and in the lobbying line item of the budget:
  - Preparation time: Preparing to lobby (planning, research, strategy meetings, etc.).
  - Overhead expenses: A portion of rent, insurance premiums, etc. in proportion to the amount of lobbying conducted.
  - Specific legislation or ballot initiative: Time and resources spent urging a legislator, city council member, political leader or voter to support or oppose a specific proposal, or time and resources spent mobilizing others to do the same.
- **Please note:** Rose Community Foundation is able to fund lobbying activities, and your answer will not influence the funding decision for this request.
**Information Sharing**
One of our goals as a community foundation is to find alignment between donors’ interests and the important work happening in our communities. In the event Rose Community Foundation donor-advised fundholders are interested in funding organizations or projects in the space in which you are working, may we share with them the programmatic information you provide on this application? Your application may be shared in part or in whole. Your answer will not influence the funding decision for this request.

**Nondiscrimination Policy**
Rose Community Foundation will only fund organizations that do not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, language, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, height, weight, intellectual or physical ability, veteran status, military obligations, socioeconomic status, marital status, genetic information, political views, or belief systems.

Please upload a copy of your board-approved nondiscrimination policy. If your organization's nondiscrimination policy is not board-approved or your organization does not have a nondiscrimination policy, please upload a document with an explanation. An uploaded document is required to submit this application.