# 2024 Policy and Advocacy Ecosystem Grant Opportunity

*Si necesita traducir este paquete de información al Español, por favor contacte a Maria Torres vía correo electrónico mtorres@rcfdenver.org.*

## Overview

Rose Community Foundation is pleased to announce 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 local communities furthest from opportunity create conditions for equity, justice, inclusion and engagement. The Foundation is 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 range of issues, representing a broad spectrum of approaches, perspectives, and populations served. Many grant recipients will be primarily policy-focused organizations, but we are open to applications from organizations delivering direct services or programming requesting funding for a specific advocacy component of their work (though proposals centered around non-policy work will not be considered). **Activities that support or oppose specific candidates or political parties will not be considered.**

Examples of work we intend to fund through this opportunity 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 that lift up impacted community voices to advance state or local policy priorities.
- Research that informs state or local 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 state or local 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, 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.

## 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 <u>are not eligible for this opportunity.</u>
- Organizations funded through donor-advised funds or giving circles at Rose Community Foundation are eligible for this opportunity, 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 that have received a separate grant from Rose Community Foundation in 2024 **are unlikely to receive funding** via this opportunity. We encourage organizations that think they may still be eligible to meet with [Ray Barrie-Kivel](#), policy and advocacy manager, before beginning their application.
- Organizations that have active multi-year grants from Rose Community Foundation **are not eligible** for this opportunity.
- Rose Community Foundation has multiple open RFPs every year, and we encourage organizations that think they could be a fit for more than one opportunity to speak with a member of our grantmaking team before beginning their application.

For questions about whether you currently have funding through Rose Community Foundation and how it affects your eligibility, please contact [Chen-Pin Hu](#) (she/her), grants coordinator, and [Ray Barrie-Kivel](#) (he/him), policy and advocacy manager.

Rose Community Foundation will only fund organizations that do not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, disability, color, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, pregnancy (including childbirth and related medical conditions), national origin, ancestry, citizenship, military status, marital status, familial or caregiver status, or any other classification protected by applicable federal, state, or local law. **Given the Foundation's Jewish roots and longstanding commitment to supporting the local Jewish community, we will not fund organizations that promote antisemitism, anti-Jewish misinformation, or hate/harm in any form against any community.**

## We are interested in seeing 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?
- The extent to which executive leadership, board and staff are representative of the communities the organization serves.
- How community engagement and participation inform the organization's work.
- The organization's recent history of impact and success leveraging policy and advocacy to advance equity, justice, inclusion and engagement.
- Whether the proposed work benefits diverse communities beyond the interests of a specific industry or group of members.
- Financial picture of the organization.

Our available grant 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 30-45 grants and expect this to be a highly competitive process.

**Grant duration:** Most grant lengths will be one year. Organizations leading important multi-year policy efforts that demonstrate an especially high level of impact may be considered for two- or three-year grants.

**Funding amounts will typically range from $15,000 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 strength of an organization's policy and advocacy work, rather than the work of the organization as a whole.

- Due to the quality and quantity of proposals received for this opportunity each year, few applicants receive grants at or near the high-end of the funding range. In 2023, 53 percent of applicants received a grant, and the average one-year grant amount was $47,000.

**Types of support**
1. **General Operating Support.** To provide maximum flexibility for nonprofit organizations engaging in policy and advocacy work, we anticipate that most grants will be for general operating support.
2. **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 local 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.
   - *Please note:* Organizations that receive program or project support will be required to report direct and grassroots lobbying expenses, as applicable.

## What are reporting and grantee expectations?

Organizations receiving grant funds will be asked to submit a short narrative report of outcomes in the online grants portal. The deadline for that final report will be specified within grant contracts. Organizations receiving program or project support 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 on priority issues.**

## Timeline
- **June 18 - July 25, 2024:** Application process open. Office hours are available for applicants.
- **July 1 - July 5, 2024:** Rose Community Foundation's office is closed. Foundation staff will not be available for office hours or to respond to questions about the grants portal.
- **August 1, 2024, at 5 p.m. MT:** Application process closes.
- **August 2 - September 4, 2024:** Follow-up calls and emails for additional information, as needed.
- **October 31, 2024:** All organizations will be notified of funding decisions by this date.
- **November 1, 2024 - October 31, 2025:** Grant period for funded projects.
- **November 30, 2025:** Final report due in the grants portal.

## For questions about this opportunity
We encourage organizations that are new to the Policy and Advocacy Ecosystem grant cycle to schedule a conversation to share about their work and learn more about the cycle. There is limited availability for inquiry calls, so we request that current Policy and Advocacy Ecosystem grantees only sign up for meetings if you have questions about the opportunity.
- You may sign up for a virtual 20-minute session or contact Ray Barrie-Kivel (he/him), policy and advocacy manager, to learn more about this opportunity.
- For questions about the grants portal, the application, or if you need accommodations to apply, please contact Chen-Pin Hu (she/her), grants coordinator.

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# Application questions
**The following questions are provided here for reference only. Please submit your responses via the online 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.** Please 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 for your point of contact with the fiscal sponsor for this project.

## Grant Request Information
- **Type of Support.** *(General operating support; Program support)*
- **Coalition/Collaboration Support.** If you are applying on behalf of a coalition, please ensure that you have chosen Program Support above.
- **Project Name**
- **Short Description**
- **Core Counties.** List the three core counties (within the seven-county Greater Denver area) in which you do most of the work related to this grant request. If you chose "statewide," please describe.

- **Level of Government.** At what level of government does your proposal seek to influence policy? Please 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? *(Legislation; Ballot measure(s); Policy implementation or rulemaking; Research to inform policy proposals; 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. Rose Community 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.
- Rose Community Foundation funds cannot be used for partisan electoral work or to endorse or oppose elected officials or candidates for public office.
- If you have any questions about permissible activities, please reach out to staff at Rose Community Foundation.

## 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.

- **Opportunities & Outcomes.** Recognizing that long-term wins may take years to enact, please 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? Please identify specific qualitative and/or quantitative results you expect to achieve in this grant period. *In your answer, please describe the results and outcomes you hope to achieve, not the activities or outputs you plan to use to achieve them*.

- **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. *In your answer, please 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, please outline how you will eventually identify and execute on those objectives.

- **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?**
  - 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 2023 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.

- o If you have not previously engaged in policy and advocacy work, instead please describe why you are interested in leaning into this type of work in the future and how you feel equipped to do so.

- **Community Served / Engagement.** Please describe 1) the community you serve and 2) how those communities or individuals engage, participate, and inform your policy and advocacy priorities and activities.

- **Leadership Diversity.** We are committed to supporting organizations led by and representative of those who are the most impacted and least represented by existing systems. To that end, please 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.*

- **Community Needs - outside scope of services** *(optional)***.** For Rose Community 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?

- **Community Needs - within scope of services** *(optional)***.** What are the most pressing issues you are seeing in the communities you serve WITHIN the scope of services your organization provides?

## Coalition Information (if applicable)
- **Name of Coalition**
- **Role in Coalition** *(i.e., lead, co-lead, steering committee member, member, etc.).*
- **Coalition Members**
- **Coalition Background**
- **Coalition Funding Needs** *(optional)*

## Financials
- **Current Fiscal Year Operating Budget**
- **Current Fiscal Year Operating Budget (upload)**
- **Previous Fiscal Year Budget-to-Actuals**
- **Budget Narrative.** Please 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. Additionally, 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 (program support requests only)
- **Program Budget (upload)**
- **Total Lobbying Expenses**. Enter the total amount anticipated to be used for lobbying expenses. If none, enter 0. Ensure the following is included in this number and in the lobbying line item of the budget:
  - o Preparation time: Preparing to lobby (planning, research, strategy meetings, etc.).
  - o 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 and Nondiscrimination

**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 values diversity, inclusion, and equity and is committed to ensuring that these values are reflected in all its activities and operations. The Foundation does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, disability, color, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, pregnancy (including childbirth and related medical conditions), national origin, ancestry, citizenship, military status, marital status, familial or caregiver status, or any other classification protected by applicable federal, state, or local law.

It is our policy to maintain a non-discriminatory environment free from intimidation, harassment, or bias based on these grounds. This policy applies to all areas of employment, including recruitment, hiring, training and development, promotions, terminations, layoffs, compensation, and all other conditions and privileges of employment, as well as to Foundation volunteers and vendors. The Foundation is dedicated to equal employment opportunities and provides equal opportunities to all individuals based on job-related qualifications and ability to perform a job.

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.