

## 2025 Policy & Advocacy Ecosystem Grant Opportunity

### Request for Proposal (Letter of Interest)

*Si necesita traducir este paquete de información al Español, por favor contacte a Maria Torres vía correo electrónico [mtorres@rcfdenver.org](mailto: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 nonprofits that leverage policy and advocacy efforts to help local communities furthest from opportunity across a wide range of issue areas that align with the Foundation's priorities. We are especially interested in supporting organizations working to address disparities or close gaps in access and opportunity 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 we aim to support policy efforts across a broad spectrum of issues, 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 policy and advocacy campaign (proposals centered around non-policy work will not be considered).

### Letter of Interest Process

This year, we are introducing an open letter of interest (LOI) process for nonprofits that are pursuing funding through the Policy and Advocacy Ecosystem grant cycle. Our goals for requesting Letters of Interest from potential applicants are to:

- Clarify our narrowed focus on supporting specific advocacy campaigns and create an intentional funding pathway for timely and impactful efforts that may not otherwise be on our radar.
- Continue learning about emerging systemic gaps and timely advocacy efforts.
- Reduce the amount of time organizations that do not fully align with the funding opportunity's priorities or may not be as competitive have to spend completing a full application.

The LOI form is intentionally brief and intended to identify promising advocacy campaigns that we are interested in better understanding through a full application.

### Letter of Interest Funding Focus

Through this open LOI opportunity, we seek to identify and support policy and advocacy campaigns that are both **timely** – meaning responsive to this unique moment in time – and **specific** – meaning concentrated on a concrete systems change opportunity.

**Please note that this is a narrower focus than past Policy and Advocacy Ecosystem grant cycles at Rose Community Foundation have had.** We expect the majority of successful LOI proposals to be for project support.

Examples of advocacy projects that fit within the scope of the LOI include, but are not limited to:

- Advocacy campaigns to pass a specific state or local policy that closes systemic gaps for those furthest from opportunity or address key challenges/opportunities in our region.
- Advocacy campaigns to mitigate emerging federal, state or local policy changes impacting local communities or populations.
- Advocacy campaigns that mitigate federal, state, and/or municipal public funding cuts to – or increase public resources for – mission-aligned public services and programs.

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 advocating for changes to specific policies or systems, *that is not the focus of this grant opportunity.*

**If your organization is not planning to advance a timely and concentrated policy and advocacy campaign in the year or two ahead, but you feel generally aligned with Rose Community Foundation’s mission and grantmaking priorities, we encourage you to forgo submitting an LOI to this open grant opportunity and instead share about your work via our [general inquiry form](#).** Our community impact team reviews all submissions to the inquiry form and will follow up with you to learn/share more if we identify alignment with our 2025 funding objectives.

## We are interested in seeing LOIs that:

- Identify the problems and/or opportunities the organization seeks to address, as well as the specific policy changes required.
- Demonstrate that the applicant is deeply informed about the issue they are working on and uniquely equipped to lead the related advocacy campaign.
- Are achievable with the funding that is being requested from Rose Community Foundation or when paired with additional anticipated/secured funding.

## 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 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 2025 are **unlikely to receive funding** via this opportunity. We encourage organizations that think they may still be eligible to reach out to Ray Barrie-Kivel (rbarrie- kivel@rcfdenver.org), policy and advocacy director, before beginning their application.
- Organizations that have active multi-year grants from Rose Community Foundation beyond November 2025 **are not eligible** for this opportunity.
- Rose Community Foundation can support lobbying activities, but grantees need to clearly report all lobbying activities related to grant funds. LOI applicants invited to submit a full application will be asked to clearly state any anticipated lobbying efforts.
- *Activities that support or oppose specific candidates or political parties will not be considered.*

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.**

## Timeline

- **June 3 - June 25, 2025:** Letter of Interest (LOI) process is open.
- **Late-June - mid-July 2025:** Follow-up calls and emails for additional information, as needed.
- **June 30 - July 4, 2025:** Rose Community Foundation's office is closed this week. Foundation staff will not be available for office hours or to respond to questions about the grants portal.
- **By July 21, 2025:** LOI applicants notified of invitation to submit a full application or of declination.
- **July 21 - August 18, 2025:** Application process opens. Office hours are available for invited organizations.
- **August 18, 2025, at 5 p.m. MT:** Application closes.
- **August 18 - September 19, 2025:** Follow-up calls and emails for additional information, as needed.
- **October 31, 2025:** All organizations will be notified of funding decisions by this date.
- **November 1, 2025 - October 31, 2026:** Grant period for funded projects.
- **November 30, 2026:** Final report due in grants portal.

## How much funding and what type of funding is available?

**Total funding available:** \$1.8-2 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 funding opportunity each year, few applicants receive grants at or near the high-end of the funding range. In 2024, the average one-year grant amount was \$38,000.
- This is a very competitive grant cycle. In 2024, 113 applications were submitted, and 35 percent of applicants received a grant.
  - It is especially competitive for new applicants. Of the 71 proposals submitted last year by organizations that had not received a grant in 2023, only 14 percent received a grant in 2024.

## For questions about this opportunity

Given the anticipated volume of interest in this funding opportunity and the shortness of the LOI form, staff will not be available for open office hours during the LOI application period. Staff will be available for meetings with organizations if/when they are invited to submit a full application.

For questions about the grants portal, the LOI, or if you need accommodations to apply, please contact Chen-Pin Hu, grants coordinator, at [chu@rcfdenver.org](mailto:chu@rcfdenver.org).

**Again, if your organization is not planning to advance a timely and concentrated policy and advocacy campaign, but you feel generally aligned with Rose Community Foundation's mission and grantmaking priorities, we encourage you to forgo an application to this open grant opportunity and instead share about your work via our [general inquiry form](#).** Our community impact team reviews all submissions to the inquiry form and will follow up with you to learn/share more if we identify alignment with our 2025 funding objectives.

## How to Apply

LOIs are to be submitted through the [online grants portal](#) no later than Wednesday, June 25, 2025, at 5 p.m. MDT.

## LOI Questions

**The following questions are available in the online grants portal and are provided here for reference only.** Please submit your responses via the [online grants portal](#).

- **Project Name**
- **Type of Support:** general operating support or project/program support
- **Mission Statement**
- **Type of Organization:** 501(c)(3) - not fiscally sponsored; 501(c)(4); Fiscally Sponsored Organization; Other
- **Fiscal Sponsor Information (if applicable):** Provide the legal organization name and full contact information for your primary point of contact with the fiscal sponsor for this project.
- **Policy and Advocacy Campaign Proposal:** Please describe the policy campaign you plan to run. We hope to understand the specific advocacy effort(s) you aim to advance and how your advocacy is responsive to this unique moment in time.

## Application Questions

All LOI applicants will be notified of an invitation to submit a full application or of declination by July 21, 2025. If invited to apply, organizations will be asked to submit the following information 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**
- **Coalition/Collaboration Support:** Are you applying on behalf of a coalition? If you choose yes, please ensure that you have chosen Program Support as Type of Support above.
- **Short Description:** Provide a description of the grant request's specific charitable purpose.
- **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.
- **Geographic Reach - Statewide:** If you chose "Statewide" in any of the Core County questions above, please describe here.
- **Level of Government:** Federal level; State level; Municipal level; District level; Other

- **Type of Policy and Advocacy Work:** Legislation; Ballot measure(s); Policy implementation or rulemaking Research to inform policy proposals; Other
- **Legal Compliance Guidelines:** Check box to agree to the following.
  - 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.

#### Coalition Information (if applicable)

- **Name of Coalition**
- **Role in Coalition:** Please describe your organization's role in the coalition (i.e., lead, co-lead, steering committee member, member, etc.).
- **Coalition Members:** Please list all other organizations involved in the coalition.
- **Coalition Background:** Please describe the coalition's mission, history and overall work.
- **Coalition Funding Needs (optional):** Please describe why the coalition needs funding.

#### Narrative Questions

- **Desired Change:** What "big picture" policy or systems changes are you working to bring about? What barriers to access and opportunity 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?
  - Additionally, please share if/how the constraints of this moment in time – such as the state budget constraints, impacts of federal funding or policy changes on local communities, or other external realities – are shifting your policy priorities and/or perspective around what is achievable and what success looks 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 2024 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 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.
- **Representation in Leadership:** 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.*
- **Meeting the Moment (optional):** Please share how your organization is responding to this unique moment in time – whether in response to federal shifts related to specific populations and communities, federal and state budget cuts, or other local trends and opportunities. If your organization's budget has been directly impacted by recent federal or state funding changes, please describe those impacts and how you are working to mitigate or adapt to them.
- **Community Needs (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?

## Financials

- **Current Fiscal Year Operating Budget (total number)**
- **Current Fiscal Year Operating Budget:** Upload your organization's current fiscal year operating budget (revenue and expenses).
- **Previous Fiscal Year Budget-to-Actuals:** Upload your organization's 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:** Please upload a program budget for the activities for which you are requesting funding. Include a separate line item for lobbying expenses, if relevant.

## 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**

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.