



Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program 2017 Request for Proposals (RFP)

Release date: October 17, 2017

SUMMARY

The Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program (NIGP) is aimed at supporting the missions of small, culturally-led organization by supporting the strengthening of their infrastructure. Increasing the capacity of small organizations which focus on historically underserved cultural communities helps position them for greater impact in their community. The Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program will provide grants to small Minnesota nonprofits and provide ongoing technical assistance in the area of financial administration.

Propel Nonprofits (formerly the Nonprofits Assistance Fund and MAP for Nonprofits) fuels the impact and effectiveness of nonprofits with guidance, expertise, and capital. We provide loans, technical assistance, financial education, fiscal sponsorship, and strategy and governance services. Our vision is a diverse network of mission-driven nonprofits building a healthy, vibrant, and more just community. We provide leadership in the nonprofit sector, with research and resources on issues and topics that impact the sustainability and effectiveness of nonprofit organizations.

Propel Nonprofits is seeking to fund 15-20 proposals that lead to meaningful improvement in an organization's infrastructure. We anticipate making between 15-20 grants, for up to \$60,000 for a period of up to 18 months. Grantees will be required to receive post-award technical assistance in financial administration and will be asked to share lessons learned through six-month reports and 1 grantee convening.

Key dates

RFP Announced:	October 17, 2017
Community RFP Informational Webinars:	Tuesday, October 24, 2017, 2:00-3:00pm Thursday, October 26, 2017, 10:00-11:00am
Proposals Due:	November 17, 2017 at 5pm
Follow-up call scheduled and Conducted:	November 17-December 8, 2017
Awards announced:	Week of December 18, 2017
Grant Periods Begin	January 1, 2018

Key Contacts

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GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION

Purpose of Grant

The Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program (NIGP) will support the missions of small, culturally-led organizations by providing grants and technical assistance that strengthen vital administrative infrastructure needed for long-term sustainability. The program focuses on increasing the capacity of small organizations focused on historically underserved cultural communities. Grantees will also have access to intermittent technical assistance focused on financial administration.

Legislative Intent

The Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program is funded by an appropriation from the state legislature. Eligibility criteria align with the legislative intent of the appropriation language (MN Laws of 2017, SF 1456 Chapter 94, Article 1 Appropriations).

Eligibility Organization Criteria

The primary organization eligibility criteria are:

- 1) Small, culturally specific organizations that primarily serve historically underserved cultural communities. This include organizations where the majority of management or board of directors positions are held by members of these cultural communities and the programs are designed to serve these cultural communities
- 2) Nonprofit organizations, including 501(c)3 organizations and unincorporated groups which have a fiscal sponsor
- 3) Organizations with current annual budgets with expenses less than \$500,000

Eligible Program Activities

The three primary activities which can be funded by this grant are listed below.

Organizational Infrastructure Improvement

Grants under this activity area can be used to improve internal organizational infrastructure. Eligible activities under this category include hiring staff or consultants to assist with: developing database management systems; developing financial systems; and, building other administrative systems needed to increase the organization's ability to access and sustain new funding sources. Other eligible expenses include investments in technology to improve internal infrastructure.

Organizational Workforce Development

Grants under this activity area can be used to increase workforce capacity that builds the organization's infrastructure. Eligible activities include hiring culturally competent staff or consultants to expand programming capacity; providing training and skills development; and, implementing other methods of increasing staff capacity.

Organizational Partnerships

Grants under this activity area can be used to create partnerships with other organizations to increase capacity. Eligible activities include the creation and expansion of partnerships with existing organizations that possess a specialized expertise; and, the creation of partnerships to increase the capacity of the grantee organizations to improve services for the community.

This is not an exhaustive list of activities which can be funded by this grant program. Propel Nonprofits will work with grant applicants to determine how and if their proposed activities fit within the eligible activities listed above.

Anticipated Grant Term and Amount

Propel Nonprofits is seeking to fund 15-20 proposals that lead to meaningful improvement in an organization's infrastructure and position the organization to be financially sustainable. The anticipated grant terms and goals are:

1. Award between 15-20 grants
2. Award grants up to \$60,000 for up to 18 months
3. Provide post-award technical assistance to grantees in financial administration
4. Grantees will be asked to share lessons learned through six-month reports and 1 grantee convening

Anticipated Payment Structure

The grants awarded under this NIGP will be administered similar to how state grants are administered. One of the additional outcomes sought by this program is to better position small organizations to compete in state competitive grant programs. The technical assistance to grantees will focus on achieving this goal.

Grants will be paid out on a reimbursement basis. Once grantees are selected Propel Nonprofits will work with the grantees to determine the reimbursement scheduled best suited for the grantee. All grantees will be required to submit intermittent financial and program reports.

Timeline for RFP Process

The RFP process will include two informational webinars to provide an overview of these grant guidelines and to answer questions organizations may have with regards to applying. Follow-up calls will be scheduled and conducted only with organizations for which the selection committee feels it needs clarifying information.

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RFP Review Process

Propel Nonprofits will engage and train a grant selection committee to review and select the grant recipients. Committee members will include Propel Nonprofits staff and community members. The committee will ensure that applicants meet the organizational eligibility criteria and allowable activities. In addition to these base requirements, other priorities will guide the selection process. These priorities include:

- Seeking Greater MN and Twin Cities grantees
- Seeking to support multiple cultural communities
- Seeking to support nonprofits providing different types of services – arts, workforce development, education, etc.
- Seek to support both established and emerging organizations

There will be no firm requirements on these priorities. They will guide the selection process, knowing that different factors, such as the number of applicants, can make achieving some of these priorities difficult.

Applying for a Grant

All grant applications must be submitted using the online form located at – <https://www.tfaforms.com/4640078>. The form will close on November 17, at 5pm. No late applications will be accepted.

Two informational webinars will be held to review this RFP with interested organizations and to answer questions. Register for one of the two informational webinars here:

Tuesday, October 24, 2017, 2:00-3:00pm
<https://cc.readytalk.com/r/ekhatpffr010&eom>

Thursday, October 26, 2017, 10:00-11:00am
<https://cc.readytalk.com/r/b2knualk7qwm&eom>

For additional information, visit <https://nonprofitsassistancefund.org/nonprofit-infrastructure-grant-program-2017-request-for-proposals-rfp-0> or <http://www.mapfornonprofits.org/services/nonprofit-infrastructure-grant-program-2017-request-proposals-rfp/>.

(NOTE: At the time of this RFP's release, Propel Nonprofits does not have a website under its new name. Propel is using the websites of the two previously merged organizations until its new unified website is completed.)

Key Contacts

The two individuals below will be available to answer questions about the grant program.

Mario Hernandez
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Sarah Leistico
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Additional Documentation Requested

In addition to the narrative questions, the following documentation will be requested in the application:

- Current year, board-approved organizational budget
- 501(c)3 determination letter or fiscal sponsor agreement
- List of board members and affiliations
- Most recent 990 or recent year-end statement of activities and balance sheet

NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

1. *Organizational Description:* Provide a summary of your organization's mission, history, strategic priorities, and key accomplishment.
(300 word maximum)

2. *Building Internal Infrastructure:* The Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program will support organizations who are seeking to strengthen their organizational infrastructure to amplify impact; to increase financial sustainability; to strengthen ability to meet goals; and, to build strategic competitive advantages. Please describe the following areas as they relate to your organization:
 - a. What three key areas of your organization infrastructure are a priority at this point in time? (Staff expertise, financial systems, grants compliance, partnership structures and agreements, policies and procedures, technology, etc)
 - b. What are you currently doing to address these infrastructure priorities?
(350 word maximum)

3. *Leadership in Cultural Communities:* The Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program will support organizations led by cultural communities who are using cultural-relevant strategies to address historical inequities in these communities. Please describe the following:
 - a. Describe how your organizational leadership – board and management – reflect the cultural community your organization serves.
 - b. Describe the cultural community you your organization serves.
 - c. Describe how your programming or services are strategically designed to achieve impact in the cultural community you serve.
(350 word maximum)

4. *Strategy for Building Infrastructure:* Explain how your organization is strategically addressing the current infrastructure priorities.
 - a. Describe how you are currently deploying resources for your infrastructure priorities. For example, are key objective part of staff annual goals; are you using volunteers to help fill capacity needs; are you securing in-kind contributions of equipment, technology, etc.?
 - b. Describe how you engage your stakeholders – employees, board members, volunteers, and other – in this your infrastructure strategies.
(300 word maximum)

5. *Organizational Work Plan:* Please describe your work plan for this grant project. The grant can be for a maximum of 18 months (January 2018-June 2019). Please include the following:
 - a. Describe your key activities to be funded through this grant.
 - b. List your goals and how you will measure progress on those goals.
 - c. Describe your timetable for carrying out the activities and achieving the goals in your project.
(500 word maximum)

6. *Technical Assistance in Financial Administration:* Propel Nonprofits seeks to help organizations improve their financial administrative infrastructure during the course of this grant program. Many small nonprofits can't adequately compete for state and local government grants or contracts because of limitations in this area. Please describe the areas in your organization's financial administration where technical assistance would be helpful, such as budgeting, cash flow projections, cash management, accounting systems, etc.
(300 word maximum)

7. *Sustaining the Infrastructure:* What is your strategy for sustaining the infrastructure improvements you've described in this application?
(300 word maximum)

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

1. *Project Budget:* Please list your project's revenue sources and expenses:

Revenue source	Amount
Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program	
Other Grants	
Earned revenue	
Other	
Total Revenue	
Expense	Amount
Personnel	
Fringe benefits	
Consultants	
Equipment	
Supplies	
Travel	
Professional development	
Other	
Total Expenses	

2. **Other Funding Sources:** If this grant is meant to cover the costs of a portion of a larger infrastructure project, please describe the large project and other sources of funding currently prospected or secured. Please disregard this question if this is a stand-alone project.
(300 word maximum)
3. **Organizational Financial Health:** Describe your organization's recent financial health. Please describe:
- Is the organization building up reserves?
 - Has the organization recently faced financial difficulties?
 - What steps you are taking to ensure good financial health for your organization?
- (300 word maximum)
4. If you are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, please attach your most recent 990 (if your organization does not file a 990, please attach their most recent 990-EZ or 990-N). Please disregard this question if you have a fiscal sponsor.
5. If you have a fiscal sponsor, please attach the following documents.
- The fiscal sponsor's most recent audited financials
 - Your organization's year-end income and expense report; and
 - Your organization's year-end balance sheet