



# 2024 Community Grants Program



The Denver  
Foundation





# The Denver Foundation

The Denver Foundation is a community foundation dedicated to improving the lives of people who live in the seven-county Metro Denver region, which includes Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, and Jefferson counties.

## VISION

A Metro Denver that is racially equitable in its leadership, prosperity, and culture.

## MISSION

We inspire people and mobilize resources to strengthen our community.

## PURPOSE

We are a proactive, collaborative, and resolute leader in reducing racial disparities.

*Cover photo by @Armando Geneyro*



## CORE VALUES: Community Leadership & Racial Equity

The Denver Foundation supports nonprofits that advance our Core Values of community leadership and racial equity. We believe nonprofits have the greatest impact in the community when they make community member engagement a core element of their programs, policies, and overall approach. Organizations must prioritize and demonstrate these values as a key part of their organizational values, practices, and programmatic approach.

*Photo by @Armando Geneyro*

# Community Grants Programs Priority Areas

The Denver Foundation seeks proposals from organizations that center BIPOC voices and constituent-led work in the following areas:



### **Economic Opportunity**

- 1) Community wealth-building
- 2) Workforce development



### **Education**

K-12 reforms with an emphasis on:

- 1) Racial equity
- 2) School funding



### **Environment and Climate**

- 1) Energy efficiency
- 2) Renewable energy
- 3) Air quality



### **Housing**

- 1) Affordable housing
- 2) Homelessness



### **Transportation**

- 1) Public transit accessibility and affordability



# Grant Guidelines

To strengthen your proposal, please take the following steps before you apply:

1. Review these guidelines, which explain the core values of The Denver Foundation and the Community Grants Program, specific funding priorities, and submission requirements.
2. **Visit our website**, which includes Frequently Asked Questions, dates for pre-application workshops, and additional information.
3. **Register through our online portal**.
4. Reach out with any questions. The Denver Foundation's Engaged Philanthropy Team is here to help applicants determine if their proposal fits within our strategic framework. To arrange a time to talk with us during business hours, please call 303.300.1790, or email [grants@denverfoundation.org](mailto:grants@denverfoundation.org).

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In our assessment of applications, The Denver Foundation looks for the following organizational characteristics, in order of importance: a commitment to racial equity, BIPOC and/or constituent leadership, alignment with The Denver Foundation's grantmaking priorities, and the financial health of the organization.





## HOW WE EVALUATE APPLICATIONS

We seek to fund organizations that are aligned with The Denver Foundation's values.

We fund 501(c)(3) organizations and collaborative efforts among 501(c)(3) organizations and other groups in the seven-county Metro Denver region that address one or more of the goals described in these guidelines. Organizations that have fiscal sponsorship from a 501(c)(3) are eligible to apply.

We prefer requests for general operating support, but we will consider both general operating and program support.

The Denver Foundation wants to follow your organization's progress and commitment to constituent and BIPOC inclusion in staffing and board representation to better serve all populations using your services. We will prioritize funding to support BIPOC-led organizations and will take into account your overall progress and learnings.

Grant awards typically range from \$20,000 to \$50,000.

We prioritize improving the lives of historically oppressed people living in Metro Denver, with a particular focus on people who live in low-income communities and people of color.

We seek to reduce racial and ethnic disparities, as well as economic disparities.

We support organizations that share and demonstrate our core values of racial equity and community leadership.

We do not fund proposals that fall outside of our priority areas. The Denver Foundation embraces organizations that work to address two or more of these priority areas. Please check all that apply when filling out the application form.

## WHAT WE DO NOT FUND

Capital campaigns

Building endowments or reserve funds

Membership campaigns

Sponsorships

Retroactive funding, i.e., activities, projects, or programs that will be completed before funding becomes available

Debt retirement

Grants to individuals (please see the Strengthening Neighborhoods program for opportunities)

Grants for re-granting purposes

Grants for medical, scientific, or academic research

Grants that further political doctrine or religious activities

Grants to parochial or religious schools

Scholarships (for more information about scholarships administered by The Denver Foundation, please visit [denverfoundation.org/scholarships/scholarship-opportunities/](https://denverfoundation.org/scholarships/scholarship-opportunities/))

The Denver Foundation does not fund organizations or programs that discriminate based on race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), physical or mental disability, pregnancy status, body type, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, except to serve a historically disadvantaged group.



## COMMUNITY MEMBER AND CONSTITUENT LEADERSHIP

Because The Denver Foundation believes that our work is strengthened by constituent leadership, we have created an **Advisory Committee for Community Impact** (ACCI) to provide feedback and guidance, including about the Community Grants Program. This 50-person committee is made up of community members, nonprofit and civic leaders, donors, and other stakeholders. Staff of The Denver Foundation and members of the ACCI will review grants. Final decisions about grant awards will be made jointly.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT VS. CONSTITUENT LEADERSHIP

Community member engagement includes the voices of those who currently or will potentially receive services from an organization. Constituent leadership makes space for community members at the decision-making table to help direct and improve programs.

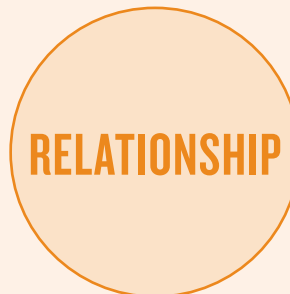
We believe nonprofits are most effective when they engage community members and constituents in planning, programming, and leadership. We support nonprofits that:

- Understand the assets that community members and constituents bring to the work.
- Ask for input from community members and constituents on their programming and organizational direction and put that input to use.
- Organize their work and programming around the self-described needs of community members and constituents.
- Include community members and constituents as members of the board, staff, volunteers, committees, and donors.

## CONTINUUM OF COMMUNITY MEMBER LEADERSHIP



Nonprofit develops the capacity to engage community members and constituents beyond providing services.



Relationships are focused on the nonprofit learning and understanding the needs and assets of the community.



Engaging community members and constituents is the standard practice of the nonprofit. Relationships are dynamic. Programs and goals promote and support community member and constituent leadership.



## RACIAL EQUITY DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are terms used within the Community Grants Program's core values framework:

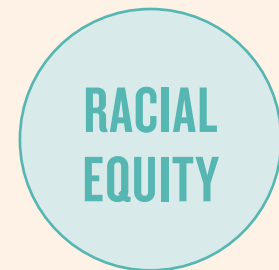
**Diversity** is the “who” of a nonprofit. A diverse nonprofit involves people of different races, ethnicities, and experiences. Diverse people are involved as members of the board and staff, and as volunteers and donors. Diversity is often the starting place for racial equity work.

**Inclusion** is the “how” of a nonprofit. Inclusion is how (or whether or not) BIPOC people can participate fully in making decisions. Inclusive nonprofits embrace the assets, needs, and perspectives of BIPOC people and incorporate them into everything they do.

**Racial equity** is the “why” of diversity and inclusion. Racial equity is when advantage and disadvantage are not determined by race. Barriers to access are removed, and everyone can participate and reach their full potential.



## CONTINUUM OF RACIAL EQUITY



BIPOC people are involved as members of the board and staff, and as volunteers and donors.

BIPOC people can fully participate in planning and making decisions. Differences in assets, needs, and perspectives are valued.

Advantage and disadvantage are not determined by race. Everyone can participate and reach their full potential.



# How to Apply

Applications to the Community Grants Program should be submitted online. To learn how to submit an online application, [please visit our website](#).

Before applying, you will need to [register through the online grant application portal](#). If you plan to apply for a grant, please register as soon as possible. You do not have to be ready to submit your application to register.

The following two pages contain the information that an organization will need to complete as part of their application. You can use these pages as a guide as you prepare to submit your application online.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your application, please call 303.300.1790 and ask to speak to someone on the Engaged Philanthropy Team.

## IMPORTANT LINKS

**The Denver Foundation Website - Community Grants Program page:**  
[denverfoundation.org/our-grants-program](https://denverfoundation.org/our-grants-program)

**More information about how to apply:**  
[denverfoundation.org/grants/grants-faq](https://denverfoundation.org/grants/grants-faq)

### PLEASE NOTE

The Denver Foundation considers applications from organizations that serve the seven-county Metro Denver area. You must be active within Metro Denver to be considered. In response to feedback from local nonprofits, we have increased the range of our grant amounts to \$20,000-\$50,000. This will result in a more competitive process.

## APPLICATION DEADLINE

March 1, 2024  
August 1, 2024  
by 5 pm

## NOTIFICATION TIMELINE

Notifications will be sent Mid-May and Mid-October

## COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM PRIORITY AREAS

As part of The Denver Foundation's strategic framework, we have updated our grantmaking priority areas. These priority areas reflect the community's input on the most pressing issues faced by people in Metro Denver.



**Economic Opportunity** focuses on:

- 1) Community wealth-building
- 2) Workforce development



**Education** focuses on K-12 reforms with an emphasis on:

- 1) Racial equity
- 2) School funding



**Environment and Climate** focuses on:

- 1) Energy efficiency
- 2) Renewable energy
- 3) Air quality



**Housing** focuses on:

- 1) Affordable housing
- 2) Homelessness



**Transportation** focuses on

- 1) Public transit accessibility and affordability

**Questions? Email [grants@denverfoundation.org](mailto:grants@denverfoundation.org).**



# Application Preview

## FINANCIALS

1. What is the date of your fiscal year-end?
2. What is your operating budget for the current fiscal year?
3. Please provide a brief summary of your financial situation.
4. Please attach your current annual budget.

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In partnership with the community, The Denver Foundation identifies priority areas for our discretionary grantmaking. The Denver Foundation prefers to fund general operating grants. If you received a grant in the previous year, you are required to submit a report before your application will be processed.

If you have questions during this grant process, please contact us at [grants@denverfoundation.org](mailto:grants@denverfoundation.org).

## GRANT DETAILS

1. Are you applying for a general operating or program/project-specific grant?
2. Requested amount?
3. Priority area? (Economic Opportunity, Environment and Climate, Housing, In-School K-12 Education Reforms, Transportation, Other)
4. Identify your primary county/geographic service area.
5. Describe an overview of your organization, including any programs or services. Highlight why your organization's work is important.
6. Describe how your work fits with The Denver Foundation's priority areas.
7. How do you determine success? What are some of your proudest moments as an organization? Share examples or stories of your impact.

## CORE VALUES: COMMUNITY ROLE & RACIAL EQUITY JOURNEY

1. Does your CEO/executive director identify as BIPOC?
2. What percentage of your board identifies as BIPOC?
3. What percentage of your staff identify as BIPOC?
4. What is the estimated percentage of your clients or community who identify as BIPOC?
5. What efforts has your organization made to engage the voice, experience, and leadership of residents, constituents, or clients in the development, implementation, and evaluation of your organization's activities? Share challenges, if any, and how you are addressing them.
6. What does racial equity mean to your organization and how does racial equity impact your work? Share challenges, if any, any how you are addressing them.



## SUBMITTING GRANT REPORTS

If you receive a grant through the Community Grants Program, you will be required to submit a final report on the work you did with the grant funds. This report is due at the end of your grant period and is required before your organization can be considered for subsequent grants from the Community Grants Program.

The grant contract that you receive contains important information on the reporting requirements, including due dates. This can be found in your grant contract under Section 8, Grant Reports. Please review your contract carefully before submitting a report. An Impact team member will reach out to you during your grant cycle to learn how your organization is doing and to support your reporting.

## SHARING INFORMATION

We sometimes share information with donors and fundfolders at The Denver Foundation. This can expand opportunities for funding. If you do not want us to share your proposal, please let us know. You will find a place to do this in the online grant application.

## APPLICATION FREQUENCY

Groups that have not applied before can apply at either the March 1 or August 1 deadline, there is no difference between the cycles. Current grantees can apply for a grant during either grant period as long as it has been at least 12 months since your last application submission regardless of the results of your previous submission.

## CONTACT US

If you would like to discuss your application with a member of The Denver Foundation staff, please call 303.300.1790 and ask to speak with an Engaged Philanthropy Officer. To connect via email, please send a message to [grants@denverfoundation.org](mailto:grants@denverfoundation.org).



# Additional Funding Opportunities

Please visit [denverfoundation.org/grants/funding-opportunities](https://denverfoundation.org/grants/funding-opportunities) for application instructions and submission deadlines for additional funding opportunities.

## STRENGTHENING NEIGHBORHOODS

Guidelines for proposals granted through the Strengthening Neighborhoods Program are in a separate document available in English and Spanish. To learn more, please call 303.300.1790 and ask to speak to David Portillo or [visit our website](#).

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

**The Technical Assistance Fund** supports Community Grants Program grantees for capacity- building activities in strategic planning, governance, fundraising, technology, inclusiveness, and resident engagement, among other self-identified needs. For more information, please visit [denverfoundation.org/technical-assistance](https://denverfoundation.org/technical-assistance).

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

**The Black Resilience in Colorado (BRIC)** fund directs resources to address systemic racism and its impact on Black communities across the seven-county Metro Denver region.

**The Denver Immigrant Legal Services Fund** supports nonprofits so that they can offer direct legal representation to immigrants. Grants will also support organizations working to increase the pool of attorneys available to represent immigrants.

**DESCI Community Housing Program** supports housing subsidies to low-income persons, 55 years of age and older, who are Denver Public Schools retirees, current and former employees, and members of their immediate families.

**The Rollie R. Kelley Family Foundation Fund** supports programs that support cultural quality of life, economic education, or children's physical or mental health needs.

**Transforming Safety** supports organizations in North Aurora and Southeast Colorado Springs working in community and economic development, prioritizing strategies that enhance community safety and crime prevention. Learn more at [transformingsafety.org](https://transformingsafety.org).

## HEALTH

**The Care Fund** supports organizations focused on the well-being of people who live with developmental, intellectual, or physical disabilities; people who are visually impaired or blind; or people who live with low incomes.

**The Comprecare Fund** supports optimal wellness for seniors in Colorado.

**The Lowe Fund** provides grants to nonprofits in Colorado that support training, education, and research into the causes, cures, and treatment of developmental disabilities, cerebral palsy, and other related nervous and muscular disorders.

## ARTS

**The Eulipions Fund** supports, fosters, promotes, and preserves artistic expression with an emphasis on Colorado African American heritage and lifestyles by providing grants to generate, assist, increase, and encourage the performing arts in Colorado African American communities.

**The Greenwood Fund** supports artifacts and collection care for museums in Colorado and Wyoming.

**Bowen Family Performing Arts Fund** supports access to learning in dance, acting, and singing for children from low-income communities.



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or 303.300.1790.

## ENVIRONMENT

**Climate Equity Fund** seeks to deploy resources to nonprofit organizations that are addressing climate change.

**Environmental Affinity Group** supports nonprofits that work on climate change and environmental justice.

**Lauren Townsend Memorial Wildlife Fund** supports animal welfare or wildlife preservation.

**The Renewable Energy Trust** is a fund set up by Xcel Energy to support renewable energy projects for Colorado nonprofit organizations and public entities.

## LOAN FUNDS

**The Metro Denver Nonprofit Loan Fund** is a new funding mechanism launched the end of 2020 to help local nonprofits mitigate the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic while countering historic disparities in access to capital. This fund is a collaboration between The Denver Foundation, Community First Foundation, and Rose Community Foundation. Find out more at [denvernonprofitloanfund.org](https://denvernonprofitloanfund.org).

**The BRIC Loan Program** was created in recognition of the historic barriers of systemic racism Black nonprofits and the Black communities they serve face in accessing capital financing. This new program offers low-interest loans to support capital projects and/or other improvements for Black-led and -serving nonprofits across the seven-county Metro Denver region. This program is a collaboration of the BRIC Fund and Urban Land Conservancy.

## GIVING CIRCLES

The Denver Foundation is home to a number of giving circles that make grants to community organizations each year. Please contact us at [help@denverfoundation.org](mailto:help@denverfoundation.org) for information on how to apply for funding from any of our giving circles.