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Vibrant Democracy - Engagement Pipeline

BACKGROUND

Seattle Foundation is excited to announce the second round of funding for the Vibrant Democracy Initiative Engagement Pipeline. The Vibrant Democracy Initiative was developed alongside Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) and Communities of Opportunity (COO) initiatives to create an integrated approach to community-engaged systems change. It invests in increasing participation and amplifying the voices of communities of color and low-income communities to bridge the grassroots capacity building of N2N and the place-based and policy change efforts of COO.

In contrast with traditional leadership programs, the Engagement Pipeline invests in programs that build community power for systems change by strengthening individual leaders who participate in community change activities that mobilize the broader community. This will increase the number and effectiveness of leaders representing their communities, broaden the participation of engaged communities and lead to greater involvement of historically underrepresented communities in efforts to shape to change systems and policies. All applicants selected to receive Engagement Pipeline leadership development funds will participate together in a cohort through the duration of the grant period. Seattle Foundation will work in collaboration with grantees to design the technical assistance provided through the cohort.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

The Vibrant Democracy Initiative and the Engagement Pipeline program focus on strengthening the voice and participation of underrepresented communities to ensure more equitable systems change.

Announcement Date: December 15, 2018.

Deadline: February 1, 2019. Based upon the LOI, selected applicants will be invited to complete a full proposal.

Amount Available: An annual total of \$400,000 will be available for grants over a three-year period.

Description: Multi-year grants ranging from \$75,000 to \$125,000 per year to support an organization or network of organizations working to increase the voice and participation of specific communities through leadership development and community mobilization.

Duration of Grant: Grants will support three-year efforts beginning in June 2019.

Eligibility: 501c3 organizations (or fiscal sponsorship by one) working in King County, Washington.

Contact Info: Please contact Dionne Foster (206.515.2106) or d.foster@seattlefoundation.org for more information.

Information Sessions:

Monday, January 7; 6:30-8pm
Tukwila Public Library, Room 1
14380 Tukwila International
Boulevard, Tukwila, WA 98168

Tuesday, January 15, 3:00-4:30pm
2100 Building, Board Room
2100 24th Ave S, Seattle WA 98144

Tuesday, January 22, 10-11:30am
Seattle Foundation, Event Space
1601 5th Ave, 19th Floor

We seek to fund:

1. Organizations or groups representing specific communities (ethnic, racial, or other identity groups) able to or currently providing leadership development programming designed to create civic engagement, advocacy, public participation, and/or systems change. We prioritize historically underrepresented communities.
2. Organizations or groups with deep ties to the community they represent and serve, bringing both knowledge and relationships that create a demonstrated ability to engage members and partner organizations within that community. We will prioritize organizations or groups with a demonstrated track record of leadership and trust within their community.
3. Efforts with a history of or ability to build individual leadership through programs and practice by connecting leadership development to action through participation in community change efforts or campaigns **and** mobilizing or organizing broader members of the community.
4. Organizations or groups willing to participate in and able to contribute expertise and technical assistance to a peer learning cohort.
5. Organizations or groups that to commit to developing and providing this programming over the three-year grant period and intend to sustain the effort beyond the initial grant.

ELIGIBILITY AND CRITERIA

A single organization or a network of organizations are eligible to apply for a three-year grant ranging from \$75,000 to \$125,000 per year depending on the size and scale of the project, as well as technical assistance tailored to the cohort of grantees.

Eligibility is restricted to:

- Organizations that either have 501c3 status or are fiscally sponsored by a 501c3 organization. 501c4 activities are not eligible for funding.

Priority consideration will be given to applicants that:

- Represent and collaborate with historically underrepresented communities.
- Have the relationships and trust to effectively represent and engage members of their community, and partner with other organizations within their community.
- Have expertise in leadership development, community organizing and/or advocacy and policy change with the staff capacity to carry out the proposed programming.
- Have existing staff and budget to complement this effort.
- Focus on developing leadership capacity for community members working on civic engagement, advocacy, public participation or systems change.

We will not fund efforts that:

- Focus solely on education without a strong component of public engagement.

Funding will be awarded based upon the degree to which applicants meet the following criteria:

Priority Community

- Focus on a specific community (including but not limited to ethnic, racial, gender identity, sexuality and other identity-defined communities) that has been historically underrepresented or under-engaged in civic life.
- Focus on a community experiencing significant social and economic inequities.
- Do not focus solely on geography without emphasis on underrepresented communities

Program Approach and Anticipated Results

- Identify a process to strengthen the voice and participation of the community they are serving in civic engagement or public participation.
- Approach leadership development through practice.
- Identify strategies that will lead to:
 - Increased ability for the target community to have systemic influence.
 - Greater involvement of a historically underrepresented community in civic engagement, advocacy, public participation, or systems and policy change efforts.
 - Increased number and capacity of individual leaders from that community.
- Increase the number and depth of engaged members of that community.

Organization History and Relationships

- Demonstrate knowledge of the target community and culturally appropriate means to engage and develop leaders within that community.
- Show a depth of relationships within the target community, effectively positioning them to collaborate with, engage and represent that community.
- Have a history of aligning with other partners on common goals or shared approaches.
- Have staff and board that are representative of the community they serve.

Qualifications and Experience

- Have expertise and experience in leadership development, community organizing and/or advocacy and policy change.
- Are led by organizations that reflect the community of focus.
- Express ability and willingness to share expertise with other grantees in the cohort.

Readiness

- Have support within the target community for the applicant to lead this effort.
- Have or will have the necessary capacity to carry out the project and a willingness to explore pathways to sustain the effort beyond the initial grant.
- Are tracking or will track the results or effectiveness of strategies and will modify practices based on lessons learned.

HOW TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Applicants aligned with the above criteria are strongly encouraged to attend an information session in January 2019. Information session dates and times are listed on the first page of this LOI Request. Applicants are also encouraged to see examples of previously successful Engagement Pipeline programs, listed [on the Seattle Foundation website](#).

If you are unable to attend an information session, contact Dionne Foster at 206.515.2106 or d.foster@seattlefoundation.org to discuss potential fit for this funding. After learning more about the Engagement Pipeline, submit a Letter of Intent (not to exceed three pages) in response to the narrative questions below, and submit the appropriate attachments.

Letters of Intent are due February 1, 2019. Following the deadline, Seattle Foundation staff will invite full proposals from selected applicants, who will be notified in early March 2019. The full proposals are due April 12, 2019, and grantees will be announced in late May 2019.

LOI Narrative Questions:

Please focus the majority of your LOI response, roughly 50%, on question 4, Approach and Anticipated Results. Those selected to submit a full proposal will receive additional questions relating to comprehensive criteria (history, relationships, qualifications, readiness). Refer to the criteria on page 3 to guide your responses.

1. **Community Served:** Please describe the community you intend to serve through this project. Who will benefit from your program? Be specific about demographics of who benefits, who leads and how your work builds power in your specified community.
2. **History and Relationships:** Describe the organization's (or partnership's) history of serving your community. What partnerships and community relationships are critical to executing your mission and strengthening the voice of your community? Provide an example of how you've worked with other partners in your community.
3. **Qualifications and Experience:** Briefly describe the organization's (or partnership's) experience in leadership development, community organizing and/or advocacy and policy change. What current programs are you facilitating in an effort to build leadership capacity? How do these programs align with the needs and desires of the community you are working to support?
4. **Proposed Approach and Anticipated Results:** Please describe your proposed approach to leadership engagement with a focus on strengthening the voice and participation of community members in community change activities. Be specific; explain who would benefit, and what would change as a result of your efforts. How would you grow/advance this work over the next three years? What would success look like after three years and what notable milestones do you anticipate in reaching that goal? Does your approach build on existing programs working to build leadership capacity or is this a new effort?
5. **Readiness:** Describe your organizational capacity (staff and otherwise) to support this body of work. How do you plan to track lessons learned and modify your approach based on them?



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6. Cohort Participation: What do you hope to gain from participating in a cohort of other grantees leading similar work? What skills, technical knowledge or relationships can you contribute to a cohort of organizations leading similar work? Please be specific about areas of leadership development where you are strong and areas where you need improvement.



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Attachments:

In addition to the narrative, applicants are also required to submit the following attachments. Attachments do not count against the three-page LOI limit:

- a. Coversheet (will include: contact information, EIN #, total desired grant amount, target community, names of partners, nondiscrimination statement)
- b. Proposed project budget
- c. Current fiscal year organizational operating budget

To submit the application, please e-mail Dionne Foster at d.foster@seattlefoundation.org by 5 p.m. on Friday, February 1, 2019 with "Engagement Pipeline" in the subject of your email. If the letter is mailed, it must be **received** no later than February 1, 2019 at Seattle Foundation, 1601 5th Avenue, Suite 1900, Seattle, WA 98101-3615.