

Vibrant Democracy - Engagement Pipeline

BACKGROUND

Seattle Foundation created the Center for Community Partnerships to advance collaborative, systemic change to achieve greater economic and racial equity in the region. We are now launching the Vibrant Democracy Initiative with the goal of strengthening the **voice and participation** of underrepresented communities to promote more equitable systems change. The Vibrant Democracy Initiative was developed alongside our two other initiatives, Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) and Communities of Opportunity (COO). 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 to create an integrated approach to community engaged systems change.

One of the ways we are supporting these efforts is through the **Engagement Pipeline** program. In contrast with traditional leadership programs, **the Engagement Pipeline invests in programs that build community power for systems change by strengthening individual leadership through participation in community change activities that mobilize the broader community.** This will increase the number and effectiveness of leaders representing their community as well as broaden the participation of engaged communities, and lead to greater involvement of historically underrepresented communities in efforts to shape to change systems and policies. Multiple grantees representing specific communities will be selected in each funding round to be part of a cohort. Technical assistance will be designed in partnership with grantees to strengthen their ability to have stronger influence over systems and policies.

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: October 7, 2016

Deadline: November 18, 2016; based upon the LOI selected applications will be invited to complete a full proposal.

Amount Available: \$400,000 will be available for grants

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 non-geographic communities through leadership development and community mobilization.

Duration of Grant: Grants will support three-year efforts beginning in February of 2017.

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

Contact Info: Please contact Aaron Robertson (206-515-2135 or a.robertson@seattlefoundation.org) for more information.

Information Sessions: To be held the week of October 24th, please see the website for details.

We seek to fund:

1. Organizations or groups representing specific non-geographic communities (ethnic, racial, or other identity groups) able to or currently providing leadership development programming designed to foster systems change. Historically underrepresented communities are prioritized.
2. Organizations or groups with deep ties to the community they represent and serve, bringing both knowledge and relationships that creates a demonstrated ability to engage members and partner organizations within that community. Organizations or groups demonstrating track record of leadership and trust within their community will be prioritized.
3. Efforts with a track record or ability to build individual leadership through programs and practice by connecting leadership development to action through a) participation in community change efforts or campaigns and b) mobilizing or organizing broader members of the community.
4. Organizations or groups willing to participate in and able to contribute expertise to a peer learning cohort and technical assistance.
5. Organizations or groups able to commit to developing and providing this programming over the three-year grant period and intending 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 serve historically underrepresented communities.
- Have the relationships and trust to effectively represent their community, 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 compliment this effort.

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

Community Served	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is focused on a specific non-geographic community (including but not limited to ethnic, racial and other identity defined communities). • Is focused on a historically underrepresented communities. • Is focused on a community experiencing significant social and economic inequities.
Approach and Anticipated Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies a process to strengthen the voice and participation of the community they are serving. • Approach will develop leadership through practice, engaging the broader community and furthering their priorities. • Identified strategies will lead to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased ability for the target community to have systemic influence. ○ Greater involvement of a historically underrepresented community in systems and policy change efforts. ○ Increased number and capacity of individual leaders from that community. • Increased number and depth of engaged members of that community.
History and Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates knowledge of the target community and culturally appropriate means to engage and develop leaders within that community. • Has a depth of relationships within the target community making them best positioned to collaborate, engage and represent that community. • Has a history of aligning with other partners on common goals or shared approaches. • Staff and board are representative of the community they serve.
Qualifications and Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has expertise and experience in leadership development, community organizing and/or advocacy and policy change. • Ability and willingness to share expertise with other grantees in the cohort.
Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support exists 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. • Is tracking or will track the results or effectiveness of strategies and has the ability to modify practices based on lessons learned.

HOW TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Applicants aligned with the above criteria are strongly encouraged to contact Aaron Robertson at 206-515-2135 or a.robertson@seattlefoundation.org to discuss potential fit for this funding. After contacting staff, those recommended to apply are invited to submit a Letter of Intent (not to exceed 3 pages) in response to the narrative questions below.

Letters of Intent will be due November 18th, 2016. Applicants being invited to submit a full proposal will be notified in mid-December 2016. The full proposal will be due January 27th, 2017 and grantees will be announced in mid-February, 2017.

LOI Narrative Questions:

Please focus the majority of your LOI response, roughly 50%, on question 2. Approach and Anticipated Results. If selected to submit a full proposal additional questions relating to comprehensive criteria (history, relationships, qualifications, readiness) will be asked.

1. **Community Served** – Please describe the non-geographic community you intend to serve through this project. What current programs are you facilitating in an effort to build leadership capacity? How do these programs map to the needs and desires of the community you are working to support?
2. **Approach and Anticipated Results** - Please describe your approach to strengthening the voice and participation of community members through practice/engaging in community change activities. How do you hope to grow/advance this work over the next three years? What would success look like in 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?
3. **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.
4. **Qualifications and Experience** – Briefly describe the organization's or partnership's depth of experience in leadership development, community organizing and/or advocacy and policy change.
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? How would engaging in a cohort of grantees help advance your leadership development work? What strengthen/knowledge could you bring to a cohort?



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Attachments:

In addition to the narrative, applicants are also required to submit the following attachments:

- a. Coversheet (will include: Contact info, EIN #, Total amount applying for, Target community, Names of partners, Nondiscrimination statement)
- b. Project budget
- c. Current fiscal year organizational operating budget

To submit the application, please e-mail Aaron Robertson at a.robertson@seattlefoundation.org by **5 p.m. on Friday, November 18th**. If the letter is mailed, it must be received no later than November 18, 2016 at Seattle Foundation, 1601 5th Avenue, Suite 1900, Seattle, WA 98101-3615.