

Creative Equity Fund 2021/2022 Application FAQ

Arts and culture are powerful tools for engaging the community in collective change. They ignite civil discourse, inspire action, and help us imagine and advocate for a just world. Underlying many of the most pressing issues in our community are the effects of structural racism. From housing and homelessness to education and health, people of color in our community experience disproportionately negative outcomes across a wide range of areas. The Creative Equity Fund supports arts and culture-based strategies that address the structural racism impacting our communities and build racial justice. The Creative Equity Fund is administered by Seattle Foundation and made possible thanks to the generous support from a collection of funders, including ArtsFund, 4Culture, Macklemore, Microsoft, Satterberg Foundation, Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, Seattle Foundation, The Sheri and Les Biller Family Foundation, and individual philanthropists.

The Creative Equity Fund aims to direct a total of \$600,000 over the next two years to support both arts and cultural groups and other community-based organizations located within King County that are by, for, and about people of color and which use arts- and culture-based strategies to work toward racial justice. This current round of funding will focus on supporting organizations most directly impacted by structural racism and colonization—those that are led by Black and Indigenous people. **The deadline to apply for this round of funding is May 3rd, 2021 at 5pm.**

Please review the FAQ below before applying and contact j.cunningham@seattlefoundation.org if you have any questions.

1) What are the eligibility requirements to apply for a Creative Equity Fund grant?

In order to be eligible for a grant from the Creative Equity Fund, your organization must meet the requirements below:

- be based in King County
- be an established 501(c)(3) charitable organization or be fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) charitable organization
- have at least two thirds leadership from Black and/or Indigenous people on your staff. If you're a volunteer-led organization, have leadership that is at least two thirds Black and/or Indigenous.
- Have at least 25% Black and/or Indigenous people on your board of directors.
- Applicant organization is actively working to dismantle structural racism and build racial justice

2) What does Creative Equity Fund support?

The Creative Equity Fund is focused on supporting arts and culture-based strategies to build racial justice. Organizations selected may be doing work in some or all of these areas:

- Infusing arts and culture into community organizing, policy, and advocacy work.
- Developing intentional relationships between Black and Indigenous organizations, initiatives, and communities in King County.

- Telling the story of structural racism related to one or more pressing issues affecting our community. This may include intersections with other forms of oppression.
- Engaging people in experiences that imagine a just and liberated world.
- Growing community power in the face of a current or impending racial injustice.

3) Can non-arts and culture-based organizations apply for this funding?

Yes! It is not required for your organization to be an arts and culture-based organization to apply for this grant. We welcome organizations that are not arts and culture-based and have funded those organizations in the past. However, you must demonstrate specifically how you will utilize arts and cultural strategies to combat structural racism and promote racial justice in your grant application.

4) What do you mean when you say racial justice?

We define racial justice as the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, culture, attitudes, and actions that eliminate harms caused to communities of color and produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all people, regardless of their race. This definition is inspired by and adapted from the definition put out by Race Forward. <https://www.raceforward.org/>.

5) Why is this round of funding focused on Black and Indigenous-led and serving organizations?

The funder collaborative is aiming to address the historic underinvestment in Black and Indigenous/Native-led organizations from the philanthropic sector while focusing on arts and culture-based strategies for racial justice. The following research is guiding our decision-making:

- In 2020 Seattle Foundation published [The Case for Investing in King County's Black-Led Organizations](#) research report in collaboration with Byrd Barr Place and Cardea Services. 44% of survey respondents stated having annual operating budgets of \$250,000 or less. Nearly two thirds of survey respondents listed having three months or less of cash reserves.
- A [recent study](#) from Echoing Green highlighted that the unrestricted net assets of Black-led organizations in their applicant pool were 76% smaller than their white counterparts.
- With Native-led organizations, the funding disparities are equally bleak. According to a [2019 report](#) from the First Nations Development Institute, less than 1 percent of total community foundation giving goes to support Native American causes and organizations.
- The [Investing in Native Communities](#) report produced by Native Americans in Philanthropy and Candid highlighted that between 2002 and 2016, large US foundations gave 0.4% total annual funding to Native American communities.

Creative Equity Fund is aiming to take a targeted universal approach and address these funding disparities and is piloting an approach to create a cohort of Black and Indigenous-led organizations that we can fund and learn from over the next two years.

6) How are you defining Black and Indigenous?

We are taking an expansive view of both terms. While the focus will be on moving resources to organizations led by and serving the native born Black populations that have been historically underfunded by philanthropy for centuries, groups from across the African Diaspora are eligible to apply. This includes Afro-Latinx, Caribbean, and African immigrant-led groups. Similarly, traditional Coast Salish organizations who are stewards of this current region will be prioritized. However, organizations led by and serving Indigenous populations broadly will be eligible to apply and considered for funding as long as they are based in King County.

7) Given the rise in violence against Asian American Pacific Islander community, can nonprofits representing this demographic apply?

With our expansive view of Indigenous populations, Pacific Islander-led nonprofits are encouraged to apply. This includes groups representing Chamorros, Fijians, Native Hawaiians, Samoans, Tongans, Tahitians, Micronesians, Polynesians, and the entire Pacific Islander diaspora.

8) Are organizations serving but not led by the Black and/or Indigenous communities eligible to apply?

In an effort to advance the arts and culture-based strategies of Black and Indigenous communities, we intend to focus our resources on organizations that are led by, rooted in, and serving these populations only. One of our eligibility requirements is having two thirds Black and/or Indigenous people within your staff leadership, thus organizations with staff leadership outside of that demographic are not eligible to apply for this particular funding cycle.

9) What if our staff leadership is predominantly Black and/or Indigenous, but our board of directors is not?

We understand some organizations strategically place individuals on their boards for their fundraising and networking abilities who represent different racial demographics than the core audience served. Organizations without 50% representation of Black and/or Indigenous individuals on their board of directors are eligible to apply, but the percentage must be at least 25%. Organizations who do have at least 50% representation of Black and/or Indigenous individuals reflected on their board will be given preference during the review process.

10) Does this focus signal a shift in decreasing funding to BIPOC-led nonprofits broadly?

No, it does not. All members of the funder collaborative remain committed to resourcing Black, Indigenous, and people of color-led and serving organizations in our ongoing grant programs. This is an opportunity for us to specifically focus one collective effort towards moving resources

to Black and Indigenous groups. We are doing this recognizing that without bold steps to address historic disinvestment, Black and Indigenous nonprofits and movements will remain critically underfunded. At the conclusion of this funding cycle, grantees and funders will collectively assess the successes of this effort and infuse them into grantmaking practices for the future.

11) Who will be making grant decisions?

Creative Equity Fund operates with a model of turning over power and decision-making to the community. To that extent, a cross-sector group of Black and Indigenous community members receiving a stipend for their time will make all grant recommendations including funding amounts.

12) When will funding decisions be made?

By the end of June 2021.

13) Are coalitions welcome to apply and able to receive an increased grant amount?

Coalitions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please email j.cunningham@seattlefoundation.org for further discussion.

14) Why am I being asked to complete an Org Profile as part of the application?

Seattle Foundation serves as the fiscal host for Creative Equity Fund. The Org Profile Form helps Seattle Foundation collect key information about current and prospective grantees and the communities they serve. This information helps us to better track where our philanthropic dollars are going and to hold ourselves accountable to moving resources to communities most impacted. Additionally, this information helps us to match organizations like yours with donors and funding opportunities. If your organization has not completed or updated the Org Profile form in the past five months, please take a moment to do so as part of the application process. You can still submit your Creative Equity Fund application if your Org Profile information isn't complete. However, if selected for a grant, your organization will need to have a complete and current Org Profile in order to receive funding. If you are unsure whether your organization's information is complete and current, please reach out to orgprofile@seattlefoundation.org.

15) What information will we be required to collect for the Final Grant Report/Evaluation at end of the grant term?

We will work collaboratively with the grantees after they are selected to seek their direct feedback on the most effective ways to evaluate progress toward success and this will inform the questions asked in Mid-Term (at the end of the first year) and Final Grant Reports (at the end of the second year). Organizations that are selected for funding should plan to track community members served through Creative Equity funded activities and key learnings from this work worth sharing with funders as general feedback.

16) How should applicants address the need for social distancing and the impact of COVID-19 in our applications, specifically the section around proposed activities?

We know some aspects of masking, social distancing, and reduced capacity for in-person indoor events will be with us for portions of 2021 and these are beyond our control. Please share how you will factor in the need for social distancing into your proposed activities for 2021 and what measures you'll take to ensure safety. Applicants can keep any 2022 listed activities as general as we know things will continue to change.

17) Creative Equity Fund is listed as a cohort. What is the frequency of cohort meetings and who from the organizations should plan to attend?

Grantees and funder collaborative members will gather together quarterly for meetings where the community-based organizations (CBOs) and funders can unpack topics and learn from one another. Meetings will be virtual while social distancing requirements are in place and slowly move toward in-person gatherings once it's safe. Dates for the quarterly gatherings are currently TBD. For the 1st year of funding, they are tentatively planned for July 2021 as a kick-off, November 2021, February 2022 and May/June 2022.

Organizations that are selected for funding are expected to attend each of the cohort gatherings. Staff representation at the meetings can vary depending on the structure of your organization. Executive Directors are encouraged to attend but it's not a requirement. We want the programmatic leads responsible for doing the work present but we leave it to each organization to determine which member(s) of their staff should attend. Whatever maximizes the learning opportunity!

18) How much funding can applicant organizations request?

For the 2021/2022 grant cycle, organizations can apply for up to \$30,000 per year for 2 years totaling a maximum of \$60,000.

19) Are previous Creative Equity Fund grantees eligible to apply again?

No, if your organization is a previous grant recipient of the Creative Equity Fund, you may not apply as the lead organization for this round. However if you're a previous Creative Equity Fund grantee serving purely as a fiscal sponsor for a community group, that is allowable.

20) If I need additional technical assistance on my application, who do I contact?

You can contact staff at Seattle Foundation: email j.cunningham@seattlefoundation.org for additional assistance or questions. We are also hosting an optional public info webinar and Q&A on April 14th from 11am-noon PST. To attend the webinar, please register [via this link](#). This webinar will be recorded and viewable later.