



CLEVELAND BLACK FUTURES FUND

Request for Proposals November 2021

Background

The Cleveland Black Futures Fund was launched in late 2020 with the overarching goal to strengthen the ecosystem of Black leaders and Black-serving organizations in Greater Cleveland by providing intentional resources to help grow organizational infrastructure and capacity. Long term, the fund aims to deepen the field of leaders working to dismantle systemic racism and advance the community towards racial equity. Since its inception, the Fund has amassed more than \$4.3M.

During its initial round, the Cleveland Foundation received more than 220 submissions—more than 40% of which represented first-time applicants to the foundation. A seven-person committee of community leaders and foundation representatives worked to select the recipients. In Summer 2021, the Fund awarded \$1.8M to 49 Black-led and Black-serving organizations. On November 15, 2021, the Fund will launch its second round of grantmaking.

Round 2 Grant Types

In Round 2, applicants can apply for two types of grants: a monetary grant and a capacity building fellowship. Applicants are welcome to apply for one or both grant opportunities and are eligible to receive both.

Monetary Grant Award

Monetary grants range from \$25,000 to \$100,000. The Cleveland Black Futures Fund expects to award up to 35 grants in Round 2.

Capacity Building Fellowship Grant

Capacity Building fellowships will be offered each round of the Cleveland Black Futures Fund. The cohort topics are determined by an analysis of the capacity building needs of previous applicants. For Rounds 2 and 3, four cohort-based fellowship programs will be offered to help participants build capacity in the areas of Leadership Development, Fund Development Strategy, Strategic Planning, and Marketing and Communications. Capacity building fellows will be provided a small stipend to offset the cost of participating in the

fellowship. Up to 15 organizations will be selected to participate in each cohort, and cohorts are expected to launch late spring / early summer 2022.

Eligibility

The Cleveland Black Futures Fund will invest in Greater Cleveland-based nonprofit organizations that are BOTH Black-led and Black-serving, with the goal of building organizational capacity. Organizations based in Cuyahoga, Lake or Geauga counties may apply.

Applicant organizations may operate in a range of issue areas, but grants can only be made to organizations currently holding 501(c) 3 tax-exempt status with an operating budget of less than \$1M. Organizations that do not currently have 501(c) 3 tax-exempt status are eligible to apply in partnership with a tax-exempt organization serving as a fiscal sponsor.

Resources for Applicants

Nonprofit organizations seeking to apply for funding from the Cleveland Black Futures Fund in Round 2 can get more information about the grant opportunity and download an applicant guide [here](#). We invite interested applicants to attend a technical assistance workshop, and take advantage of the one-on-one grant writing assistance. You can sign up for one of the technical assistance workshops [here](#). You can sign up for a grant writing assistance session [here](#).

Can Round 1 Applicants Apply?

The Cleveland Foundation received an overwhelming response for the initial round of grantmaking—223 unique applications representing nearly \$20 million in funding requests. The amount of available funds in Round 1 was the determining factor in selecting our first cohort of grant recipients. Our volunteer committee had to decline many proposals in Round 1 simply because the requests far exceeded our resources. While we will continue to grow this Fund and our capacity to support the work of all Black-led and Black-serving nonprofits, we will designate 50-75% of the funds available for Round 2 to returning Round 1 applicants. **Round 1 grantees will be invited to apply again in Round 3, anticipated to launch summer 2022.**

Timeline

- November 15, 2021: Round 2 Launch Webinar at 5:00 p.m. ([click here to register](#))
- Week of November 15, 2021: Online application portal will open. Please continue to check back online for more information.
- November 22, 2021-January 18, 2022: Grant Writing Assistance ([click here to register](#))
- November 29, 2021-January 6, 2021: Technical Assistance Workshops ([click here to register](#))
- January 18, 2022: Application deadline
- February, 2022: Notification to applicants who are not advancing to the second stage in the review process
- March, 2022: Notification to applicants who are not advancing to the final stage in the review process
- End of March: Notice of Final Funding Decisions

